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1, Park Side, S.W.

H.S.H. THE PRINCESS VON HATZFELDT-WILDENBURG.



THE Journal for all interested in

Country Life and Country Pursuits

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** With this issue of COUNTRY LIFE we are giving away a copy of THE ACADEMY in its new form, but our readers ought to remember that the two can be posted only as separate newspapers.

THE LABOURER . . . AND THE SOIL..

THERE is a question now being raised with increasing imperativeness, and it is this: How long will England's foreign food supply hold out? A few years ago it would have been deemed absurd to raise such a query. All the countries of the world seemed to be united in the one task of pouring into Great Britain an inexhaustible supply of food. Those who felt the effects of this movement were too near to it to stop and consider how singularly interesting was the phenomenon. Such a thing never occurred before in the history of the world. Famine, blight, pestilence, disease have stalked over the land, killing and desolating, but never before had plenty come, as it were, with both hands full and running over, so that none was so poor but that he might taste of the abundance. And, as is the manner of humanity, this purely transient state of things began to be accepted as permanent, even to be legislated for. No heed was paid to the economist of the old school, who laid it down as an irrefutable axiom that population ever tends to pass the limits of the food supply, or, in other words, that the normal condition of mankind is one in which food is dear and difficult to obtain. With a thousand ships steaming over the seas with cargoes of grain for English households, with an equal fleet of iron ships fitted out with cold-storage apparatus, and transporting meat from the most distant lands to the metropolitan market, it seemed most absurd that ominous voices should still continue to repeat

this ominous saying about the population and the food supply; but, as often happens, it was the quiet voice that was right, the self-complacent, deluded crowd that was wrong. People did not stop to take into account the purely accidental state of affairs that accounted for this glut of food. The dreadful year 1879 had stricken British agriculture to the ground. Our misfortune was the opportunity of hundreds of farmers who were cultivating their land overseas. It suddenly dawned on them with a clearness before unprecedented that not only could they raise food cheaply, but the modern resources of navigation would enable them to carry it at small cost to the great centres of European population. Here was a revelation indeed. The Texan cowboy, the Canadian wheat farmer, and the busy Australian went about their work with a new cheerfulness when they saw opening up before them this splendid prospect of selling their produce to advantage. Very soon ships loaded with food for human beings were steering their way across the great seas and ultimately filling the shops of London, Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, and all the other great British towns.

But latterly signs have been many and sure that this state of things is coming to an end. The law that Jeremy Bentham believed so implicitly in continues to act. Where food is plentifully produced population begins to grow. The United States, that at one time seemed able and willing to supply the whole of the rest of the world with food, is already beginning to feel the time approaching when the Americans will require all that they produce. As far as the great staple of humanity, wheat, is concerned, this point is being rapidly reached, not solely because of the increase of population in the United States, but also for the reason that those who are engaged in the cultivation of the land are finding more profitable employment for their capital than the growing of grain. Fruit farms are multiplying among them. They are increasing the number of their dairies and finding various other outlets for their energy, with the result that the Canadian farmer is, more and more, being called upon to supply the United States with grain. A similar process is bound to occur in other parts of the world, and our wheat supply of the future must for some time depend largely on India, whose climate is as variable and capricious as femininity itself. It may be asked how all these facts affect the British labourer on British soil, and the answer surely is not far to seek. As food increases in value, so also do his chances of earning a sufficient livelihood. But yet there is something wanting. There are two periods in English history, and only two, in which the British peasant was contented. If we consider the conditions that prevailed then, we shall find that they are eternally necessary to produce a like result.

The periods referred to were the fourteenth century and the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century. In the earlier time the manorial system was in full swing. The villeins cultivated the soil for themselves, and paid a labour rent to their lord, and there is every reason to think that they were happy and contented. They were as well fed in those days and probably as well housed, all things considered, as they have been since; but the Black Death, and the incidents that followed it, broke up the system. It was after that that sheep-farming for wool came to be such a lucrative pursuit, and those who engaged in it found that the old manorial system could not be worked in the old way. From that time until after the reign of Elizabeth the peasant was half the time in revolt, at the mercy of the Jack Cades and other quacks and demagogues of the time. Then, too, there was a rural exodus as pronounced as has been that of more recent times, so that in the reign of Elizabeth the problem excited great attention. Among other things done to bring about its solution, a Small Holdings Act was passed, making it compulsory that everyone who built a cottage should attach a portion of land thereto, thus anticipating the cry of Mr. Jesse Collings, "three acres and a cow." Out of this state of things grew up, one scarcely can tell how, the class of yeoman farmers who were at one time looked upon as the backbone of England. They existed because they had, in the first place, possession of a small portion of ground, and, in the second, common rights over the waste of the manor. It was to the Enclosure Acts that we owe the rural exodus in its modern form, and the difficulty in the country to-day is, in its main aspect, that of making it to the self-interest of the peasant to remain on the land. It is good that he should be amused, that he should have village halls, and village libraries, and all those other institutions which philanthropists provide; but they will be of no avail until he has as foundation some solid and enduring interest.

Our Portrait Illustration.

OUR frontispiece this week is a portrait of the Princess von Hatzfeldt-Wildenburg. Her Serene Highness is the adopted daughter of Mr. Huntington, and was married in 1889 to Prince Franz von Hatzfeldt-Wildenburg.



WE take no political side in COUNTRY LIFE, but it is scarcely possible to help noting the important Ministerial changes that have been taking place recently. One of the most interesting is the resignation of Mr. George Wyndham, Chief Secretary for Ireland. It seems but yesterday since Mr. Wyndham was acting as Mr. Balfour's private secretary, and it is difficult to realise that he should be severing his connection with the Ministry with which he has been associated for so long. Lord Milner's retirement from the post of High Commissioner for South Africa was by no means unexpected, since it is well known that he wished to come home early last year. Lord Selborne has been appointed to succeed him, and the Navy's new First Lord is Earl Cawdor, who, as Viscount Emlyn, sat for ten years in the House of Commons as member for Carmarthenshire.

After two days' voting the University of Cambridge, following the example of Oxford, has decided to retain Greek as a compulsory subject; but the strength of the minority shows that in the University there is a considerable amount of dissatisfaction. There is a good deal to be said on both sides of the question. No one who is qualified to speak at all would for a moment deny the high educational value of the classics, and Greek literature is the corner-stone of that of the whole world. Therefore, it is a good argument that inasmuch as a certain groundwork of education is needed by every boy before he begins to specialise, Greek ought to have a place in the curriculum. At the same time, it should not be forgotten that as soon as a youth has definitely fixed on the career that he means to follow, it will soon become known to him to what extent, if any, the classics will be useful. A man whose ambition is to be a great engineer, for instance, would not be wise to give his days and nights to the making of Greek verses or the study of ancient texts. But the whole question fixes on the time when specialisation should begin.

The appointment of Dr. Osler of Baltimore to the Regius Professorship of Medicine in Oxford University may be accepted as a sign that the authorities of our ancient educational institutions are not so fast bound by the traditions of an historical past as some of their opponents have supposed or have pretended. It is an interesting appointment, although by no means the first of its kind, as giving evidence of the recognised intellectual kinship of the two great branches of Anglo-Saxons, and also of the willingness of the older branch to assimilate all that it may of the more youthful and possibly more vigorous learning of the younger. In rather a special manner Dr. Osler, in his leave-taking address to his old University, allied himself with the side of youth by the singular statement that at forty a man has passed his "era of power," and that at sixty (an age which the Professor himself will soon reach) the lethal chamber begins to be worth serious discussion for him. We have said that Dr. Osler's appointment is by no means without precedent. The appointment of Professor James, the eminent psychologist of Harvard University, to the Gifford Lectureship at Edinburgh, and his well-read "Varieties of Religious Experience," under which name the lectures made their published appearance, will readily occur to mind as an instance in point.

The conference at the Mansion House, in our opinion, came to a right decision when they resolved that emigration was a proper method of dealing with poor-law children. For, if we take into account the environment in which these urchins are brought up, it will easily be seen that salvation should begin with dislocation from all the old associations. There is no disguising the fact that most of them are born into an atmosphere of crime and filth, and that the longer they stay in it the more difficult it is to eradicate the stains which their minds receive. But if these children were taken quite young and placed in some household thousands of miles from their birthplace, where they would be

sent to school with companions who had sprung from respectable parents, and where they would live in the open air and in a healthy, wholesome manner, the chances are that they would grow up into steady and respectable members of society; and that, it seems to us, is the whole case for emigration.

The proposal to acquire twenty-four acres of beautifully-timbered garden and meadow-land on Denmark Hill in South London is one highly deserving of support. London's garden suburbs, that once formed so important a feature of the metropolis, have long been disappearing, and, metaphorically speaking, the axe had already been laid at the root of the fine trees in Denmark Hill, and a contract for cutting up the property for building purposes had actually been signed, when the idea of purchasing it to make a public park was started. Luckily the price asked is not extravagant, namely, £2,000 an acre. Land in the neighbourhood has been sold for as much as £5,000 an acre quite recently. It is proposed to call the park the Ruskin Park, and the great art critic was so much associated with Denmark Hill that the appropriateness of doing so is self-evident.

Mr. Benjamin H. Thwaite read a most useful paper to the Society of Engineers the other night on the misuse and neglect of our canal system. He suggested rather a drastic remedy, namely, that the State should acquire the canals by compulsory purchase on the basis of the capitalised value of the profits. Whatever may be thought of this scheme, the advisability of making more use of the canals is scarcely open to question. By them agricultural and other staple produce could be more cheaply transported than by any other means, and the neglect of the last sixty or seventy years is much to be deplored. During the forties the railway companies, through legislation, obtained control of fifty different canals, and were in a position to govern the rates. But the experience of the promoters of the Manchester Ship Canal has shown how mischievous it is that railway companies should be able to take the governance of canals. At any rate, Mr. Thwaite is doing good service by keeping the subject before those who are most interested in it.

THE CHILD.

A child's face is the window of his soul,
That yet untrammell'd by the world's control,
Like some still pool upon a summer's day,
Ruffles to every wind that blows that way.

A child's face is a yet wide open door,
That every year Life shuts a little more.
It stands wide-thrown, and to and fro pass free,
Of his fresh thoughts, the white-robed company.

A child's face is a harp that string'd stands
Waiting the touch of any passing hands
That chance to strike the clear, obedient strings,
Giving the captive melodies their wings.

A little pool that ruffles to the winds,
An open door where each one entry finds,
A string'd harp to answer song or hymn,
So is a child's face to his every whim.

PAMELA TENNANT.

In his last report on the vital statistics for England and Wales, the Registrar-General draws attention to the way in which the continued decline in the birth-rate necessarily affects the figures of the annual death-rate in a more complex manner than might be supposed at first sight. When there is a steady diminution in the number of births for a good many years, the effect will be to lower the death-rate very perceptibly, because of the decline in the proportion of very young children, among whom the mortality is always greatest, to the whole population. For a second period of years, on the other hand, the death-rate will be raised, because the number of persons entering on the prime of life becomes smaller in proportion to those reaching old age, with its higher rate of mortality. After a further period the death-rate will tend to diminish again, as the survivors of the earlier generation disappear, and the births and deaths readjust themselves on the new footing. This affords a fresh example of the care with which statistics of all kinds have to be examined if the risk of fallacious deductions is to be avoided.

Dr. Dawson Burns has been troubling the conscience of the nation by drawing up its drink bill. It appears that in 1904 the people of the United Kingdom drank intoxicating liquors to the value of £169,000,000. The only consoling remark he has to make about this terrific bill is that it is slowly but gradually decreasing. During the last five years it seems that we have been spending rather less on our liquor, and if the rate of diminution continued it is probable that in three or four centuries the country might be described as moderately sober. Dr. Burns ascribes such improvement as has taken place to what Artemus Ward used to call moral suasion; but we are

afraid the more cynical statistician will say it is a phenomenon due only to harder times. The facts go to show that when the country is prosperous it consumes much drink, and when hard times come it takes rather less. But in any case the statement of value is probably misleading, because it is well known that the consumption of very expensive wines has received a severe check recently.

"Dulse and tangle" used to be a common street cry in our Northern towns some thirty or forty years ago, but as an article of diet seaweed has long passed out of use. An attempt has recently been made to revive it. The suggestion has arisen from the fact that the people in the country of our ally Japan are in the habit of eating seaweed at least once a day, and their conduct during the war would seem to afford adequate testimony that it is good for their muscle and their stamina. Our forefathers believed that dulse was not only nutritious, but medicinal, and there is a great deal of folk-lore pointing to a popular belief that it is calculated to ward off many diseases. Whether this be so or no, it would be most interesting if some of our cooks would turn their attention to this edible vegetable. It was regularly eaten here for ages, and is still consumed to a large extent abroad, so that its dietetic merits are unquestionable. But we have become more fastidious in our tastes, and what is required is that someone should devise a method of cookery that would make it palatable. Whoever did so would have the merit of having opened up a new source of food for the poor.

In the South of England the first and foremost object of the farm pond seems to be to receive the drainage of the farmyard, and only incidentally is it looked to to supply drinking water for all the stock. In colour dark green, with a depth of some 2ft. of rich manurial deposit at the bottom, it is nothing short of miraculous that the animals will consent to drink of it, and, having so drunk, continue to live. When we consider that two-thirds of the most available plant food, the volatile salts of ammonia, in a muck-heap pass away when the liquid is thus drained from it, it becomes easy to see why the cost of manuring a farm is so heavy. This same liquid, properly stored in covered tanks, and distributed by tank-carts over crops ready to feed on it, should, at a rough estimate, improve the crops resulting by over 50 per cent., and would certainly pay a handsome rate of interest on the outlay necessary, besides which stock, especially where well bred, would show increased health and more sturdy constitutions.

The description given in a French contemporary of a mixed flower and vegetable farm in the near neighbourhood of Paris, sets one wondering whether a similar enterprise might not be successfully worked in many of the sheltered nooks and corners which abound in these islands. The visit to the farm alluded to took place towards the latter half of the month of April, when, as regards the flowers, the principal sales were of violets and wall-flowers, and the proprietor's information as to the prices realised for these flowers was to the effect that in October violets would fetch 18fr. for 100 bouquets, 5fr. for the same quantity at the beginning of April, and 75c. at the end of the month. With regard to the wallflowers, they were worth 10fr. the 100 small bundles in the early part of the season, but were now being, practically speaking, given away. Vegetables, such as spinach, peas, tomatoes, Brussels sprouts, cauliflowers, and chicory, appeared to be the most marketable and the easiest to grow, and a considerable space was taken up by strawberries, the most favoured plants being the *Hericart de Thury*, Noble, Juganda, and Docteur Morère. There are many places in this country where violets are grown on a fairly large scale. With a little care and attention violet-farming pays more than well, and the French farmer pointed out that by judicious management the vegetables were made to assist in the sheltering of the earlier sorts of violets. It would be interesting to know the result of such an experiment in this country.

Mr. Willis Bund, chairman of the Severn Fishery Board, makes a report of the condition of the salmon supply in the river which is highly interesting, but not highly encouraging. He has to refer to a prolonged absence of grilse, which perhaps may be taken as the most unfavourable sign of all for the future salmon supply of the river, and a decrease in the present numbers of the salmon. The greater number of the fish taken last season were fish on their second migration from the sea. There seems to be little doubt that for various reasons the fish do not have the same access to convenient spawning-beds that they used to have, and the smolts appear to have departed from their old habits of migration. All these are interesting points that seem to invite further study, but they do not seem to give good hope for the future of Severn salmon. The chief feature of the spring angling appears to be the capture of a 40lb. fish in the Garry, the biggest fish, it is said, ever taken in that river. From the Severn nets one has been taken of 45lb.

Throughout England generally the spring in most respects is singularly early; all farming produce is well advanced, and in our gardens the swelling of the buds and the appearance of the young foliage are only too forward, and likely to suffer a serious set-back in the cold nights of later spring. In the South of France, and in Southern Europe generally, all the tendency is the very reverse. Even the almond trees that we expect to see in bloom long before this are hardly showing their flowers on the north side of the Pyrenees. All is backward, almost beyond precedent, and so conspicuous a contrast between the seasonal condition in England and on the Continent has perhaps hardly ever been known before.

After the exhibition of Shire horses and Hackneys, the Agricultural Hall offers its hospitality to thorough-breds and hunters, when the chief interest centres in the display of thorough-breds competing for the twenty-eight King's Premiums of £150 each in value. The money, amounting to about £4,200, which is now distributed annually in the shape of premiums, was formerly given by the Government in prizes, which were raced for under the name of Queen's Plates; but as it was found that these races mostly fell to the lot of a few horses, and that little good ensued to the breed of race-horses in general, the funds have been placed at the disposal of the Royal Commission on Horse-breeding, and are now allotted by them to those thorough-bred horses which, in their opinion, are the most likely to be of general use as getters of stock suitable for hunting and riding purposes. An interesting discussion has arisen, as to whether or no, in awarding these premiums, the judges should place much value on the actual performance of the horse on the race-course, and as to whether stallions with no public racing performances to recommend them should be discouraged or excluded; the subject must be of interest to many country people. Our own opinion is that, other things, such as breeding, soundness, and make and shape, being fairly equal, a decided preference should be given to the animal who has proved by his racing career not only his capacity for galloping, but, what is still more important, that the strength of his constitution and the soundness of his limbs have enabled him to support the stress and strain of training.

SPRING AND AUTUMN.

Heart, that lies in the lee of the kirkyard wall,
Do you feel no lift of Spring in the grass above,
When earth is turned again to her dreaming of love,
And the wind is white where the blackthorn petals fall—
Comes there nor touch, nor call?

Heart, now long laid low where the drift of the blast
Has a sound without your dwelling that never tires,
Is no voice borne through the flame of the Autumn fires,
Crying, the work is done and the years have past—
Saying, I come at last?

JANE COX.

No doubt it has happened to many of us, who are bound by the almost too complex ties of modern life, to wonder now and again, not without a certain envy, at the life of the tramp, reduced as it seems to be to the most primitively simple elements. Amongst the questions that the sight of these poor wayfarers will have suggested to us is the distance that they habitually cover in their daily tramps. It is a question to which the answer has been revealed lately by the discovery of an itinerary which one of these gentlemen of the road amused himself by keeping. There is no reason to suppose that his case was not fairly typical, and it is to be noted that in his wanderings during the period covered by his diary he had a faithful female companion with him. The itinerary showed that from October 1 to close on the end of February the pair traversed only a few miles short of a thousand. The longest walk in a day was just twenty-eight miles, and on several of the days this distance was nearly equalled; the daily average, however, was not large.

Had the subject occurred to him, the genial "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table" might have found an excellent text for one of his philosophical dissertations in speculation on the probable future value of the manuscript of a popular piece of literary work, and the various reasons of a sentimental nature that would lead to its appreciation; but being clearly a modest man, it is likely that he would have been filled with just astonishment if any accredited prophet had foretold him that the manuscript of those very dissertations would change hands at the figure of 4,000dol., at which it has lately become the property of Mr. Pierpont Morgan. One effect of the sale will, doubtless, be a vastly enhanced value attached by the modern author to the manuscript of the works he publishes.

With this week's issue we are sending to each subscriber of COUNTRY LIFE a copy of the *Academy* in its new form. It will speak for itself, and those of our readers who are interested in literature and the fine arts may possibly like to subscribe to it.

WAYSIDE RELIGION IN ITALY.

NO traveller in Italy can fail to be struck by the number of shrines, crucifixes, and crosses which meet his eye when wandering among the hillsides or in the lake country of the "bell paese." Each one will tell its tale, whether of history or sentiment, in its own special fashion, and awake in men emotions and recollections stirring alike to scholar, to poet, or to thinker. The air will be full of the deep religious spirit which prompted the erection of these witnesses to the faith, and will hallow many a thought as the Story of the Cross arrests the eye, or the saving grace of Our Lady is presented in some act of miraculous deliverance. Different feelings and thoughts will be aroused in different natures; but no one can question the hold these evidences of their belief have on the people of the district, or the touching devotion that is in their minds either for the Saviour of mankind, or more often for His Blessed Mother. "The Mother of God" appeals to these simple folk in the most beautiful earnest way. They are assured that no entreaty to her will ever be left unheeded; they know that a loved being committed to her care cannot in the end be altogether lost. Their lives, too, being spent so much in the open, it is natural and right that these tokens of higher things should compass them around in their labour, in their rest from the noonday sun, and



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CORPUS CRISTI DAY AT BELLANO, LAKE OF COMO.

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when at the close of the day they slowly trace their steps homeward.

Take, for instance, the ordinary life of the peasants of North Italy. Their houses are not their homes in our sense of the word, and they have not the love for their dwelling-places which seems inborn in English men and women of the same class.

They live in the fields, or on the mountain-top, tending the cattle or bestowing the needed labour on such fruits of the earth as the rough nature of the ground may produce. The accidents and escapes that have occurred in the neighbourhood are familiar to them from experience or tradition, or the ocular demonstration that one of those shrines will suggest. For a rude painting will bring before them some peril averted, some danger surmounted, and their thoughts will at once ascribe the miracle—why doubt that it is one?—to "La Madonna Benedetta." The very nature of the country is one that suggests danger. The crop of hay or maize, small as it often is, growing on the steep, slippery hill slopes, must be gathered in, no matter at how great a cost. And the cost is of the highest, for those slopes offer no foothold to the reaper, precautions are never sufficiently observed, and the toll of victims is annually a heavy one—a sad tribute to the exigencies of life, and to the strivings of the poor for daily bread. Such victims must not be forgotten. A cross or crucifix will generally mark the spot where they fell, and their mates in the village will murmur a prayer for the repose of a poor comrade's soul as they uncover their heads and sign themselves with the sign of the cross.

The open-air processions, which in summer-time especially form so marked a feature of the outdoor life and religion in Italy, are also a great characteristic of the wayside worship in the land. The patron saint of each village is honoured in this fashion, and a long line of peasants—men, women, and children—will be seen winding up some hill to the little church or chapel perched on a height, and sacred to the saint whom they consider particularly their own. The effect of colour obtained by the different and gaudy-hued handkerchiefs that the women wear on their heads is very striking, and the whiteness of their linen sleeves forms a sharp and grateful contrast to the sober dresses of the men. A solemn, rather dreary chant is joined in by all, except the bearers of a heavy cross or banner, whose attention is wholly directed to the safe conveyance of the burden committed to their charge. These processions have different objects at different seasons; they take place occasionally when a long drought has prevailed,



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FISHERMAN'S SHRINE, CHIOGGIA.

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Mrs. Aubrey le Blond

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A WAYSIDE SHRINE NEAR RIVA.

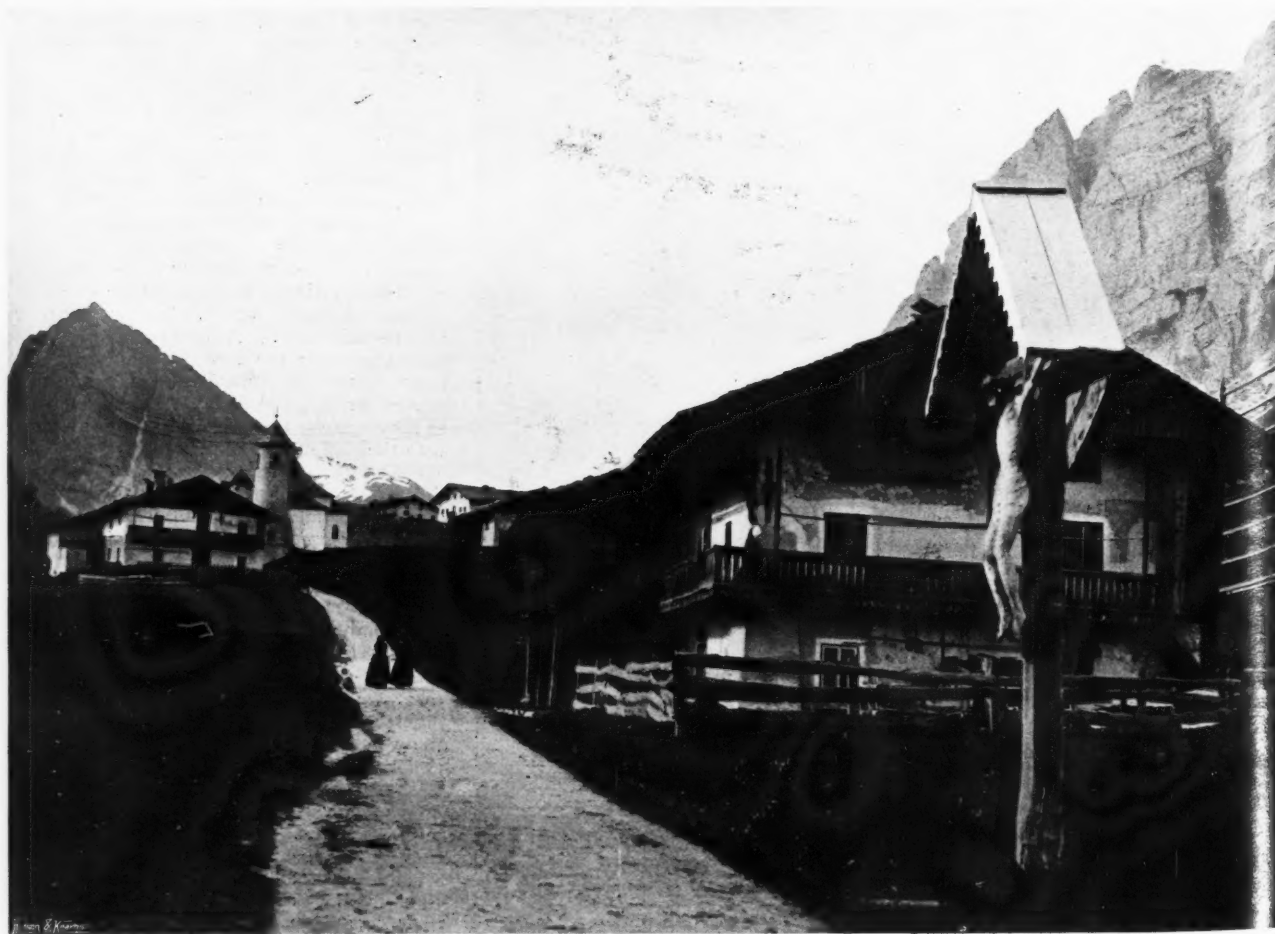
and when intercessions and prayers are offered up to those saints—San Fermo is a special favourite—who have power to open the heavens and send rain upon the earth. Or, again, during the Rogation days of May, processions are

held for the purpose of invoking a blessing on the fields, or the crops, on the vines, and all the kindly fruits of the earth. Other processions again are in honour of one of the Madonna's many festivals, and then it often comes about that a quaint image of Our Lady is brought out from the church and carried round the parish by maidens dressed in white. All this takes place out of doors, under the open canopy of Heaven, and who can say that it is not a form of service specially pleasing to Him who dwelleth not in temples made with hands?

The shrines dotted here and there in the landscape are another marked feature in the out-of-door, wayside worship, and are frequently of a good style of architecture and with no small claim to beauty. A handful of wild flowers will often be seen placed on one of them, while kneeling or resting on the step will be the figure of a girl. Her head is gracefully bent before the image which speaks to her of comfort, hope, and love; and here she feels that, come what may, she has found the one who will understand, encourage, and pardon her, whatever others may think or say. Her life, though simple and almost monotonous in its daily round, has yet its romance, its hopes, its fears; and she knows that, if she but confides all, trusts all, to the Blessed Lady, her dreams of happiness may yet come about. The neighbours who pass by and who know her story will either sigh or smile; but all will be of one mind in feeling that she has done well in praying at that shrine, and that, had they been in her case, they would have done the same.

Several of the shrines date from many centuries back, and are built at a spot where some miracle has taken place. It may be that a traveller was rescued from the perils attendant on a lonely and precipitous road; or a peasant saved when death stared him in the face, and his desperate cry for succour to the saint in whom he trusted prevailed to save his life. In fact, most of the beautiful shrines scattered over the mountainous districts of the Peninsula are tokens of thankfulness and praise for mercies vouchsafed, or for perils averted, and the sight of them cannot but commend itself to the respect of the traveller, who, even if he does not know the story in all its details, must yet allow that here, at least, mercy and gratitude are met together, and that Italy does well to plant evidences of her religion throughout the highways and byeways of her land.

The great crucifix, lifted up on high, is more often the token of some misfortune, the sign of a death, probably sudden and violent at the same time. But the wayside religion of Italy points a lesson of hope and comfort at the awful hour. It lifts



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A VILLAGE CRUCIFIX, MAJON, ITALY.

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A PASSING PRAYER.

J. Shaw.

up the Cross of Christ, and bids all who look on the image of Divine Love and Divine Suffering to believe and realise that redemption has been won for man, and that death is henceforth swallowed up in victory.

ALETHEA WIEL.

FENELLA.

MOST people who come in frequent friendly contact with gipsies soon grow accustomed to some of their habits which at first may excite a certain amount of repugnance. In my own case, I am now neither surprised nor shocked when, soon after I have entered Josh Lee's brilliantly-painted travelling van, that gipsy's handsome daughter Fenella lays aside the tartan shawl or crimson velvet skirt she is mending, and takes down from a shelf above the window a short clay pipe. She would do the same, though, possibly, for a different reason, if a clergyman came to visit her, for Fenella, as her brother Gus sometimes remarks, "has her little ways," and clergymen are among her pet aversions. She is, however, as fond of her pipe as I am of mine, and, though I once ventured to hint that pipe-smoking was scarcely a becoming habit in a girl barely out of her "teens," I have never been able to make it clear to her that she is wrong in permitting herself the indulgence. To tell her that smoking is an "unlady-like" habit would never do, even if it were true; there is no telling how she might take it. She might cheerfully admit that she is quite aware of the fact, or, what is equally likely, she might throw the pipe at me, give me a look like that with which she once made the chairman of a bench of magistrates feel like a detected pick-pocket, and refuse ever to speak to me again. Besides, I could never find it in me to suggest that anything Fenella did was "unlady-like." The van-dwelling chi and the house-dwelling rawnnee are not to be judged by the same code.

When her pipe is alight, and the steady gaze of her dark, inscrutable eyes is veiled by the smoke-wreath rising to the roof of the van, Fenella always reminds me of some exotic princess, such as we read about in Eastern romances, and the likeness is increased by the swaying pendants of her earrings and the rings and bangles on her fingers and wrists. She seems the personification of Eastern indolence—one who might be the pride of a harem or the odalisque of an Eastern king. The lithe alertness which characterises her movements abroad gives place to a dreamy languor. If she changes her position it is for one of greater repose; yet her eyes have a persistent wakefulness. No matter how deeply she may be sunk in dreamland, she is conscious of all that is going on around her; not a sound, not a movement escapes her notice. At the brushing of feet through the heathland bracken she assumes an attitude of motionless yet emotional expectancy; when a restless bird stirs or trills in the brambles, her lips part and she holds her breath. For all her sphinxlike impassivity, she is a true creature of the greenwood and child of the open air. Instincts inherited from an ancestry of rovers warn her of non-existent dangers and make her responsive to Nature's wild voices.

No wonder she has many lovers. The witchery of her beauty and the dovelike crooning of her voice are irresistible by

the young chals who meet her on the road or by the camp-fire. Of gorgio lovers, too, she has not a few; but old Josh Lee, greatly as he loves her, would see her dead rather than wedded to a despised house-dweller, and the young gorgios are too familiar with his fiery temper to venture to play the lover before his face. If I were a young man, and carried myself as do the young country blades when Fenella's eyes are on them, I should never be permitted to talk so freely with her as I do; but age has its privileges, and among them I reckon that of Fenella's confidence. She knows I am one of her sincerest admirers, and because she knows I am content to sit with her in the gloaming when the nightingales are singing, and ramble with her on the heathland when the yellow-hammers are flitting among the gorse, and the whinchats are chatting on the brambles, she grants me favours for which some of her lovers, Romany and gorgio, would give all they possess. In return for my book-lore—my stories of Helen and Penelope and the judgment of the shepherd of Mount Ida—she tells me something of the story of her heart. Such confidence as this no man deserving of the name could

betray; but it has made clear to me that in regard to lovers her views and those of her father are at variance, and at times I have fears as to what will be the ultimate fate of my Romany maid. It hardly surprises me that she has little inclination towards the life led by most of the gipsy girls entrusted to the keeping of swarthy rovers who consider it beneath their dignity to work; yet when she seeks my advice I am at a loss what to say. There are times when I feel that fate has dealt hardly with me in sending me into the world nearly thirty years before Fenella's life began; when I would gladly, were I twenty years younger, risk her father's wrath and make her mine in despite of him. But Fenella, I trust, has seen no glimmer of these embers of youthful fires. When she finds I cannot help her to unravel the tangled web of her life, her face grows sad for a while, but is soon gay again.

My chances of seeing Fenella are not so frequent as I would like them to be, for her father, like most of the true gipsies, is a horse-dealer, and seldom stays long in one place, and only the ashes of the camp-fire remain to show where he has been. But, if she can, Fenella comes to say good-bye to her old friend. Regret at parting seems to be mutual;

but Fenella is young, and to the young such regret is only as a summer cloud, which soon vanishes and leaves the sky blue again. With me the shadow stays longer, and I am full of sad forebodings. I tell myself that the time must soon come when our parting will be final—when, if I meet Fenella again, she will not be my companion in heathland rambles, nor the sharer of my delight in the singing of the birds and the freshness of the breeze. Another will have first claim upon her, and will, I tell myself, have little sympathy with the day-dreams and shyly-revealed aspirations which have endeared her to me. If we meet we shall speak, perhaps; but neither of us will have much to say, and soon we shall go our respective ways. Then I shall be glad to think of Fenella not as she is, but as she was in the old days when together we traced the winding footpaths through the gorse, sat by the van door while the stars grew bright and the heath's face darkened, and listened to the churring of the nightjar in the wood. Dreaming of these past delights may not be all pleasure; but thinking that Fenella no longer enjoys them would be all pain.

W. A. DUFF.



Percy Lewis

COMFORT, HOPE, AND LOVE.

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WHERE PRIMROSES BLOW.

NO passion has developed more strongly among English people of late years than that for flowers. We can easily learn from old books that the taste for a posy or bouquet among our ancestors was more or less an exceptional one, and marked a person of taste. And if it were necessary to establish our opinion by statistics, it could be done by applying to those which deal with the production of flowers as a matter of business. Even thirty years ago the number of people engaged in growing flowers for the market was exceedingly small; now it is immense, and increasing annually, and the reason is that we have come to be almost extravagant, if not senseless, in our use of flowers. Of course, we say that without the slightest desire to argue against their use for decorative purposes. Any inhabited room of a house is rendered much more beautiful by the introduction into it of cut blossoms and living plants. Nor is there any reasonable objection against even a prodigal use of flowers in church, as they, if anything, will tend to produce the atmosphere most suitable to devotion. And in the hour of prayer it is well to have some fair memorial of the passing seasons. The Lent lily, the Michaelmas daisy, and the holly berries in their several ways mark the passage of time. The one way in which we think flowers are squandered and wasted is at funerals. To heap a coffin over with expensive hothouse flowers is certainly not an intelligent tribute to the memory of a dead friend, nor is it either pleasing or wholesome. Indeed, it is almost as ridiculous as the custom of buying artificial wreaths from florists, putting them in a glass case, and placing them on a tomb. This is the sort of respect which money can always command, and for that very reason it has no real significance beyond the formal and conventional one. For, after all, the greatest pleasure that flowers can give is while they are growing on their natural stalks; and there are many of us who, in spite of all that cultivation has done, still hold that some of the simplest wild flowers are more exquisitely beautiful than those which are awarded prizes at the horticultural exhibition. Or, to put the case less argumentatively, they, at all events, have a simple and perfect beauty of their own. The primrose is as good an example as could be given. In colour it is most delicate, and in shape unsurpassable, while the situation in which it is generally found growing tends to enhance its natural beauty. We need not sing its praises, since the flower is, as many will think, even too much admired. So much so, that the woods and dells within a considerable radius of every large town have been ransacked for



L. H. West.

THE BREATH OF SPRING.

Copyright.

these harbingers of spring. No objection could be taken if only the cut flowers were ravished from the place where they grow, since the life of a flower is a brief and passing one at the best, and, perhaps, if it could be consulted, it would rather end its transient existence as the fairest ornament a girl can wear than wither and die on its stalk, but the despoilers of the woodlands are in the habit of grubbing up the plants, roots and all, in order to make merchandise of them in the street. And one would not grudge that if the supply were inexhaustible. In spite of all that has been said or done, there are in the dark, mean streets of London thousands of little children, and even of grown men and women, whose experience of the country has been so exclusively limited to hop-picking that they have never seen a sward white with daisies or a coppice aglow with early primroses. If to their miserable homes a root carries the slightest hint of the beauties of advancing spring, who would have the heart to grudge it them? But then we know that the supply is not inexhaustible. Every year the flowerless circuit round London continues to expand, and one has to go further and further afield to see the flowers grow in their natural condition. And what a pleasure those who destroy them are robbing the rest of the world of! One remembers still the joy it was during the school holidays of childhood to go on the first primrose-gathering expedition of the year. It occasionally comes back now when, pacing the woods in the last windy days of March, or in the beginning of April, at the sight of a young mother with her child in one hand and a basket in the other, and the

little one toddling off every now and then to cull the first of the blooms that are appearing where the plantation slopes from the road to a stream that tinkles down the centre of the wood. At first it is difficult to obtain a single blossom, but the appearance of one is a signal to many others, and soon by rabbit-burrow and tree-root clusters appear with so lavish a prodigality that there is no longer any need to search for them. And a hundred other associations spring up at the thought. It is the season when the buds of the beech are expanding, and the rooks, busy with their domestic cares, are cawing and flying at the tree tops. The squirrel, after the hard winter, has got a new and shining coat, and may be seen frolicking on the branches, he, too, moved with the impulse of spring, is searching for his mate, while all the little feathered woodlanders are busy with the same delightful care. Without a certain quotation no remark about primroses would be complete, and yet we do not know that the "river's brim" is the most favourite haunt of the flower. We know river banks that break as cliffs



L. H. West.

DAFFODILS.

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P. Wallis. BLOWING ON THE GRAVES. Copyright.

do to the sea, which during late spring and early summer are one mass of flowering primroses, and on the wild sea banks themselves it is by no means unusual to find them growing in profusion; but this is scarcely what one would call on the brim, though near enough to suit the poet's purpose. Perhaps one of the most destructive agencies ever invented for reducing the



L. H. West. GARDEN ESTRAYS. Copyright.

number of wild primroses was the institution of a day sacred to the memory of Lord Beaconsfield, when, under the supposition that it was the favourite flower of that brilliant statesman, those who hold his memory dear deem it incumbent to wear the flower. The best of the joke is that, as far as can be learnt, Lord Beaconsfield really had not any particular love of it, except so far that he was once heard to remark that its petals could be made into an extremely nice salad to eat with cold lamb. However this may be, to wear a flower in their honour is a beautiful way of commemorating anyone; and, so long as the desire to do this does not encourage the wholesale pillage of those woods, lanes, and banks where the primrose grows wild, there is much to be said in favour of the custom and nothing against it. It is always difficult to find the middle way, and we are always going either to one extreme or the other. That children should destroy flowers and ruin the natural beauties of the earth is a pity, and yet at the same time it would not only be harsh, but extremely unwise, to expect them not to go seeking and picking flowers, just as in the same way healthy boys, we hope, will always



L. H. West. IN THE MEADOW GRASS. Copyright.

go birds' nesting in spite of all the Protection Acts that have been passed. But we hold that they can do this without being destructive. It is essential for the welfare of children that they should learn to love the country, and nothing is more likely to teach them to do so than the allurements which are held out by such amusements as going nutting, flower gathering, or birds' nesting.

SHOOTING & PRESERVING IN THE THIRTIES.

BETWEEN the shooting records of the beginning of the last century, as depicted by Lord Granby with the aid of the Belvoir game-books, and the very best shooting of to-day, as described and illustrated in *COUNTRY LIFE*, there intervened a period when attention was paid to the improvement of "natural" pheasant-shooting before the era of artificial rearing, borrowed from France, began. The Belvoir records show how miserably bare of game—not only of pheasants, but even of hares and rabbits—the coverts of a great estate could be, when only seven or eight head were bagged in a day's sport by a duke and his companion, for it was customary to shoot in pairs.

A neatly-bound and quaintly-illustrated little volume, reprinted by Messrs. Methuen from an original published in 1837, reflects the position of the sport before it became as popular as



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PORTENTS OF THE STORM.

A. Cooke.

it is now, but when country gentlemen of sense and energy were trying to improve it. "Gamonia; or, the Art of Preserving Game; and an Improved Method of Making Plantations and Coverts, Explained and Illustrated," was written by Laurence Rawstorne, Esq., the owner of a fine country house called Penwortham, near the navigable part of the river Ribble. He was evidently a man of some consequence and a leading light in the shooting world. He was also an expert in the making of plantations, and was struck by the fact, now pretty generally recognised, that the small coverts, while inexpensive, hold far more pheasants in proportion to their area than do large ones, and that many of the great woods recently planted were of little or no use for game at all. He dedicated his book to the Earl of Derby, afterwards president of the new Zoological Society, because their tastes were identical and they were neighbours.

That big covert shoots, as then understood, entailed much the same anxieties then as now may be gathered from the fact that failure often led to the host losing his temper, or, as the author phrases it, to his "being incommoded with the overflows of a bilious temperament, and pouring forth the vials of his wrath upon his gamekeeper, when he ought rather to accuse his own mismanagement, nor expect to find an ill-formed and neglected covert the resort of the pheasant, when it is entirely destitute of every requisite for giving them shelter and protection."

Mr. Rawstorne's views about what are good pheasant coverts are sensible enough, and highly creditable, considering the time at which he formed them. But to the general reader his remarks on the modes and position of the pheasant-shooting of the day will be more interesting, especially as they are illustrated by admirable coloured plates, from pictures drawn on the spot by an artist called J. T. Rawlins. The scenes on the Ribble, the almost prehistoric steamers, the farmhouses, the country seats, the shooters, the dogs, the game-carts, and the whole *mise-en-scène*, should be compared with a set of the photographs of big shoots to-day; and though game was scarce, still a "hot corner" was not unknown, at which the ladies of the house-party are looking on, elegantly dressed in pink, yellow, and blue, with poke bonnets, muffs, and tippets. But to an experienced eye the roughness and want of finish of much of the sport will be painfully evident: Keepers cheyving running pheasants, chance assistants grabbing hares by the leg, or "shooing" them back to the guns, in doing which one gets a charge of shot in his leg, pointers entrusted to retrieve wounded rabbits, and retrievers of a day when slips and "non-slips" were alike unknown, and uncommonly like black poodles, working their wicked will in the middle of a flush.

One odd point may be mentioned. The writer constantly uses the French word *battue*, and says how wonderfully pheasants had increased—to such a point, indeed, that, "though it is a thing hardly to be credited by our forefathers, two shots could kill in a day three hundred and thirty pheasants, which was done some years ago at Coombe in Worcestershire." But artificial rearing was still unknown. Preserving then meant keepers, artificial feeding in the coverts, and the provision of stacks of

grain there; though it is strongly advised that pheasants' eggs which were mown out in the hay should be reared under bantams. "It is not many years since pheasants became so plentiful in this country as to afford an object of general diversion. They were before either confined to Norfolk or thinly scattered over large tracts of woodland, in which the difficulty of the pursuit enhanced the value of the prey." Pheasant-shooting, as then understood by great proprietors, involved only the cost of paying the keepers and putting some food into the coverts. But the birds, it is pointed out, were worth 5s. a brace, and more than that in London. It may be doubted whether the extra expense of more keepers, eggs, rearing, coops, and beaters to-day is greater in the end; for the birds shot under the old system, which Mr. Rawstorne thought so perfect, were so few that they only paid for the feeding. Nowadays they should pay the keepers' wages, though the shooting-rent, whether foregone by an owner or paid by a lessee, is always a dead loss. The wastefulness of their methods from the point of view of the small number of days' shooting provided was great. There were so few pheasants that one day finished off a large covert for the season. "The covert is beat once, and if daylight permit it, for a second time. By these means a great slaughter is made for the quantity seen. The limited number of hens is killed early. At the second beating every cock that has escaped the first attack lies so dead that he becomes almost certain shot. What ensues next? The covert is shut up for the remainder of the season, and never more that year is a gun fired in it."

For practical purposes to-day there is no need to follow Mr. Rawstorne through the details of his proposals for game plantations, though they are interesting as showing the practical side of his character. Among the best is his recognition of the value and quick growth of osiers for game cover. The chapter, by Mr. Harry Upcher on making game coverts in the first volume of the COUNTRY LIFE volumes on "Shooting" illustrate some of the latest views as to the best forms of planting for modern shooting. But the *obiter dicta* of a many-acred and energetic North Country proprietor on estate forestry in the thirties are interesting. He states that Chat Moss had devoured an enclosed park, called Burton Park, the oak rails of which were in his time found below the peat. "Mosses," a formation peculiar to the north-western counties, were, in his opinion, capable of being planted with advantage, or reclaimed, though the worst of them remain as "mosses" still. He notes that blackthorn makes a capital screen for the seaside of plantations near the coast, a shrewd suggestion which looks as if derived from inspection of the great natural blackthorn thickets on the sides of the South Devon cliffs. Most readers will agree, also, that hazel is the best possible underwood, and that it should be planted at the same time as the trees. The latter grow up automatically, while the hazel can be cut as soon as there is room, and will spring again.

The coloured illustrations show the "swell" shooting costume of the day: blue cutaway coat, white tall hat, white trousers (probably white Bedford cord), and a "choker." The guns are loaded by keepers, who, with the beaters, all wear tall hats.

WILD BIRDS AND THEIR HOMES.

THE successful photography of wild birds is almost entirely dependent on, or at any rate greatly facilitated by, the excellent "bait" afforded by their nests and young. Without this means of bringing the parent birds within reach of the camera the bird photographer would reap but a meagre harvest. Food placed regularly on some convenient spot, especially during severe weather in winter, is a means by which pretty photographs of certain species may be obtained; but the results are not to be compared, for interest and usefulness, with pictures taken at the nest. It is the most important period of the bird's life, and a series of photographs, together with careful observations made at the close quarters necessary for taking the photographs, may throw much light on nesting habits, such as methods of feeding the young and cleaning the nest.

In making studies of the nests of woodland birds many difficulties are encountered, the overcoming of which, however, gives zest to the pursuit. It is not, as might be at first expected, those nests which are built in trees that are the most difficult to photograph, for if we except such birds as rooks, which choose the thin top branches of high trees, there are few British tree-nesters that cannot be reached by a little climbing and with ingenuity in fastening the camera to the branches. The worst to manage are nests placed in dense hedges, more especially so when high up; these, unless belonging to a scarce or much-desired species, are better left unattempted, with the hope of finding one more conveniently placed.

The hawfinch and goldfinch generally select the most

inaccessible places, especially the latter, which almost invariably builds its nest high up on a hedge, or on the thin outer branches of a small tree, too high to reach from the ground, and where there are no branches stout enough to work from. There is nothing for it but to resort to some such device as fastening long sticks to the legs of the camera, and to elevate yourself on anything there may be available in the form of ladders, boxes, or even the shoulders of a strong and willing friend; the operation is sure to involve the best you are capable of acrobatically, and the whole is likely to result in failure owing to movement of the nest or inadequacy of the crazy camera support; therefore, when dealing with such a subject, do not hesitate to be prodigal of your plates.

But, exceptional species apart, in photographing the nests of the common passerine birds—thrushes, warblers, and finches—it is but one here and there, out of a great many found, of which it is possible to make satisfactory studies, and even then only with a good deal of clearing away of intervening branches. This latter needs doing with extreme care in order not to destroy the natural appearance of the surroundings nor to deprive the bird of shelter; the obstructing branches need not be cut away, but can be bent to one side and afterwards replaced.

Fewer nests still are found in situations where it is possible to photograph the bird either sitting or feeding her young, for not only is it imperative that the nest be within easy reach of the camera, but it must be sufficiently well lighted to allow of short exposures, a very important factor, which is in inverse ratio to the obscurity sought for by the bird.

One of the most charmingly situated nests I have seen was the thrush's which forms our first illustration, and it is interesting to me in that the owner of it was the first wild bird I succeeded in photographing. I found it whilst on an early morning ramble in search of a subject on which to test a new lens; as I did not at the time know of any nests suitable for my purpose, I went to the nearest place where I should be likely to find one. Leaving Cambridge by the Hills Road, I turned into the one which leads to Trumpington Road. A short byeway, it is, by one of those



W. Farren.

A SONGSTER'S DWELLING-PLACE.

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oft-found contradictory examples of terminology, known as the Long Road; all along its southern side there is a narrow plantation of small oak, beech, and elm trees, with dense undergrowth, which ends opposite to a similar plantation which bounds the western side of Trumpington Road; both are celebrated resorts of the nightingale and other warblers. Charles Kingsley, in his beautiful prose idyll, "A Charm of Birds," mentions this very plantation when refuting Milton's:

"Sweet bird, that shunn'st the noise of folly,
Most musical, most melancholy."

He says: "So far from shunning the noise of folly, the nightingale sings as boldly as anywhere close to a stage-coach road, or a public path, as anyone will testify who recollects the 'Wrangler's Walk' from Cambridge to Trumpington forty years ago, when the covert, which has now become hollow and shelterless, held, at every 20yds., an unabashed and jubilant nightingale." This was written in 1867, at which time, no doubt, one of those occasional clearings of undergrowth had taken place, which,



W. Farren.

INDECISION.

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although betokening good woodmanship, is disappointing to the bird-lover, as for a time at least it leaves little shelter for the birds. In all the years I have known it, up to the time of which I write, the covert has been thick and dense with undergrowth, and Kingsley's estimate of a nightingale at every 20yds. has held good. In 1903 a great part underwent a thorough clearing, and now, indeed, that part is hollow and shelterless. To return to my story. I left my bicycle in a ditch, and entering the plantation, came upon the thrush's nest almost at once; it was built

on a fairly stout elm sucker, up the stem of which ivy trailed, scant and elegant. There was no need to move a single leaf for taking the photograph, and being near the south-eastern edge of the plantation, it received the full benefit of the early morning light; so I determined to make an attempt to photograph the sitting bird, for which purpose I went again in good time on the following morning.

The camera was soon made ready, and fixed about 8ft. away, the nest carefully focussed, and a plate put in position; then attaching about 40ft. of rubber tubing to the shutter release, I concealed the camera beneath a green cloth cover, leaving nothing visible save the lens. A few sprays of ivy were then arranged over all to break the formal outline of the mass, and noting that no stray leaves were in front of the lens, I trailed the long rubber tube along the ground to a convenient clump of bushes, among which I could lie concealed and command a fair view of the nest.

Moving about in the sun, one would have said it was a beautiful fresh April morning. Rain-clouds were travelling rapidly from the north, but they were small and scattered, and seldom covered the sun, which was bright and comforting; when it was shut out for a minute or so by a small cloud the day seemed very dull and chilly by contrast. As I lay under the bushes, the warmth of the sun did not reach me, but the chilly draughts cutting round tree trunks did, and I was fain to alter the disposition of a mackintosh I had brought with me to lie upon, and use it as a covering instead.

I must have waited nearly half-an-hour before I caught sight of the thrush sitting on a branch near the nest, eyeing the camera in a very nervous manner. There for a time she remained, then flew to another tree further away, and seemed by her behaviour to have forgotten the nest altogether; at last, as though suddenly remembering it, she flew round close by my hiding-place, and perched on a bush between me and the nest. This is always the most trying period to the watcher, when a shy bird, between fear of the camera and Nature's call to the nest, hovers so close around as to make it necessary to remain absolutely motionless; the slightest movement at such a time would almost certainly be detected by the bird in her nervous condition. This would be fatal to a successful result. Of course, it is at such times that one is afflicted with an almost irresistible desire to move. While I lay watching the thrush, with eyes incessantly watering, from constantly gazing into a chilly draught, I was seized with cramp, in both legs, varied with that uncomfortable sensation known as "needles and pins," which blended

harmoniously with the workings of some very real thorns. But the slight discomfort was more than compensated for by the charm of the absolute indifference towards my presence displayed by the birds which chanced to come that way, for so long as I remained quite still they apparently did not regard me as dangerous. Two cock blackbirds chasing each other through the undergrowth flashed by one after the other within a foot of my face. A nightingale practised his song in a bush barely 2yds. away; it was not a great performance, but he had probably arrived in England only within the last day or so, and why should I criticise his song, when I could see distinctly every vibration of his throat and the tremor of the separated feathers of his back? A blackcap warbler in far better voice sang in the bush directly above me. I could not resist raising my head to look at him, which ended his song with a startling abruptness.

For fully two hours I waited, and during the last twenty minutes had seen nothing of the thrush. She had evidently given up as a bad job, so, as it was already past breakfast-time, I reluctantly followed her example. In order to test the working of my apparatus and the efficiency of the exposure I had set the shutter for, I squeezed the ball before leaving my hiding-place. The result was a good negative, giving a prettier rendering of the nest than another in which the eggs were shown. I felt the eggs, which were quite cold, and I feared that, even if the bird had not deserted, they

would not hatch; so, although I felt somewhat resentful towards the thrush, and inclined to self-commiseration on my failure, I was conscious of a feeling of guiltiness for having broken up a very pretty home. In the afternoon, like Eugene Aram, I was impelled to visit the scene of my imagined crime, and was greatly relieved, on looking through the hedge, to see the thrush on her nest. Owing to a spell of bad weather, three or four days elapsed before I paid another visit to the nest, when I was agreeably surprised to find five newly-hatched thrushes in place of the eggs which I had feared were spoiled. That eggs within a few days of hatching should be unharmed although chilled was a great surprise to me at the time, but similar experience has since confirmed this fact. The most sensitive period appears to be in the early stages of incubation.

Now that the thrush had young ones to feed, I hoped that parental instinct would prove stronger than her fear of the camera, and, although it did so eventually, it was only after I had waited from seven o'clock until half-past eight that I made my first exposure, during which time the thrush was manifesting



W. Farren.

FEEDING HER YOUNG.

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Emerging from the bushes, I put a fresh plate in position and reset the shutter. Within ten minutes the thrush was back

again with a fresh supply of worms. She was now plainly assured that the camera was harmless, and, with but little beating about the bush, flew on to the nest, presenting a front view. For a time she stood looking down at her family, and so I photographed them, the young birds with necks stretched to their utmost and widely-opened mouths, each claiming first bite, the mother with a quaintly puzzled expression, as though she were quite undecided where to begin; she does not want to do any one an injustice, but for the life of her she cannot remember whose turn it is. I settled the doubt by releasing the shutter, the falling of which startled the thrush, and she flew away, and if she were the wise bird for which I took her, swallowed the worms herself. Elated and satisfied with my success, I packed up my apparatus and left, both parent thrushes scolding me out of the plantation.

Two mornings after I visited the spot again. Alas! there was no thrush to scold my approach, and where the nest had been there were only a few stray grass straws. Nothing but cruel mischief of the most wanton kind could have prompted the robbery, for the young birds, unfledged, were useless even for the refined cruelty of caging. Sadly I



W. Farren.

BROODING.

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quite as much uneasiness as I was feeling. With a bunch of worms dangling from her bill, she flew from branch to branch, sometimes going a good distance away, and anon drawing up close to the nest, when her brood would clamour lustily for their breakfast, wherein I heartily sympathised with them, although I think I showed more self-control than they did; but it was tantalising that all six of us were being kept from our breakfast by the camera-fright of an old mother thrush. Parental instinct triumphed at last, and she flew on to the side of the nest, where for an instant she stood upright, looking round at the lens peeping at her through the green cover. Here was my chance. Holding the large rubber ball between the palms of both hands, I gave a good vigorous squeeze. It takes an appreciable time to force the air through 40ft. of tubing, so, when the exposure took place, the thrush had altered her position, and was caught in the far more interesting attitude of actually feeding her young. She was evidently too busy to notice the noise made by the fall of the focal-plane shutter, for she delivered all the food she had brought before she left the nest.

have prompted the robbery, for the young birds, unfledged, were useless even for the refined cruelty of caging. Sadly I



W. Farren.

A GOOD PORTRAIT.

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turned away, feeling—but that is my own affair; and as to what I said, well, that is my own affair, too.

Although I had succeeded in making satisfactory studies of this thrush, I was quite convinced that the method of procedure adopted was not the best for such nests. Being so far away, it was difficult to see when the bird was quiet and in a good position, and it was necessary to risk alarming it by revealing myself each time I changed a plate. So I constructed a tent, after the fashion of that designed by the Messrs. Kearton, to roughly represent a tree trunk, large enough to hold myself and camera. In the garden of a friend there was a thrush's nest built among ivy on the side of a rustic summer-house. Within 6ft. of this nest I set up my tent, and as there was no fear of its being disturbed, left it for two or three days in order that the bird might become accustomed to it. At half-past six on the third

morning I entered the tent with my camera, and in 25min. had taken five photographs of the thrush, either standing on the side of the nest or brooding her young. The light was very bad, necessitating the comparatively long exposure of half a second, but so easy was it to watch the movements of the bird, that with a silent shutter I had but little difficulty in making the exposures. Only two out of the five negatives showed slight movement.

For most birds, except the "waders" and other very timid species, I have since found that it is by no means necessary that the tent should represent a detail of the environment, such as a tree trunk. The most important point to observe is, that nothing in the nature of brass fittings and polished woodwork is visible. During the last season I worked very successfully with a dull green umbrella tent, securing some interesting series of pictures, of which more perhaps hereafter. WILLIAM FARREN.

A WEEK IN THE NEW FOREST.



W. A. J. Hensler.

NEAR BROCKENHURST.

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It is beautiful in the Forest after the fogs that caused so much discomfort in London. Not a leaf on the trees, save where an ancient ash or a secular oak shows a mantle of russet brown. The hollies glisten green, the heather is swayed by a warm breeze straight from the Sargasso Sea, across Dibden Bottom it stretches as a warm-tinted foreground. Range upon range of wooded slopes are lost in a blue haze to the north. At Ipley Ford tangled stunted oaks reflect their gnarled trunks in the brown water. The stream meanders mid rushes and sedges towards Hertford Heath enclosure, whose black fir trees give a gloomy tone to the landscape. Four miles down it opens into the Beaulieu River, on whose banks were built many a good ship in the days of England's wooden walls. Buckler's Hard is one of these deserted slips of old. At Ipley you may catch a glance of a gipsies' encampment, the smoke issuing from holes in the tops of their tents. A shy colt with bobbing head pushes silently across the stream and runs yellow legged through the brown grasses. Just between the rough strands a shoot of green here and there appears. With a whirr and a "cluck! cluck!" a big cock pheasant, his lustrous purple neck ringed with white, escapes across the heath to Bow Barrow. It was well meant, my fine

fellow, to give the hens a chance; they disappear right and left, running into the briars. The tall bracken will give them shelter. Not much of it remains, as the commoners have gathered it all into those gold brown stacks that are a feature in every farm enclosure. Shaggy ponies, their long coats lifted by the breeze, gaze unconcernedly at the newcomer. With zigzag swoop a plover shows alternately her white breast and bronzed wing. As yet she is alone. Two months hence pairs of peewifs will wing their flight over Denny Lodge walk. Their nests will be in the bottom, near the thorn trees, where the nightingales sing in May. And there, digging great holes in the ground with his strong beak, is a scarlet-headed, green-backed woodpecker. Tap! tap! he goes later on the trees, but now seeks his food lower down on the ground.

Next day came a mighty wind from the Atlantic, and all was changed. The rooks rose in diagonal swoops from the surface of the ground, making for Holmsley, then thought better of it and rested in Ashurst Woods. In the upper reaches of the Beaulieu River, sheltered by the rising ground at Matley Heath, the wading birds sought cover. You might drive by the pond in front of the Palace House at Beaulieu to-day without seeing a heron. The swans sought shelter under the garden-wall by the

Hensler. *BUCKLERS HARD, BEAULIEU RIVER.* Copyright

river from the wild, west wind. But it had no bite in it this gale. Dear Charles Kingsley's "ladies' breeze, bringing home their lovers over all the seas." The big German liners made a record time from Sandy Hook to the Needles. It is easy to see that the prevailing wind blows from the ocean over this country. The thorns in the hedges, and even the stout oaks, are twisted and turned till their branches point to France. I seem to doubt the stories of the ancient prosperity of the forest as I pass one of its most famous abbeys. Why did the monks select this hollow, and why are their Beaufré (Bœuferie) and Bergerie close to the winding river?

Could farms and villages ever have dotted the sandy plains between this and Brockenhurst; or Rhinefield, or Bisterne Commons? The Conqueror had a hunting ground ready to hand, and if he had left the monks at Christchurch and Beaulieu alone he never would have been abused for turning out the West Saxons. After all, these same Saxons are still on the land. It is they who call the bracken the "vern"; and the stream where the red-bearded pirates landed before Knüt's time, the "Danes' stream" still. Since the tall deer, that William "loved as though



W. Rawlings.

A FOREST BYEWAY.

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he had been their father," have entirely disappeared, the hollies have made such growth in the forest as to clothe its dells in shiny, bosky coverings, this year bright with scarlet berries. The growth of the various conifers, austriacus, insignis, and others, is causing anxiety to the commoners, who fear that their rights of turbary and grazing may be lost with the under-wood.

Now rude Boreas blows, and across the frozen flats of Flanders comes a biting wind that drives every bird to shelter. The roads are powdered with a white dust that is blown in clouds over the moorlands, and icicles hang on the beech branches. The ponies find the use of their long coats now, as

*THE OLD ABBEY FORCH.*

they stand with their tails to the wind behind the gorse, or in the gravel-pits, at the bottom of which a little water remains. In

1903, the rainfall was so heavy that many of these pits became lakes, and gravel was difficult to obtain. In no place will you find better donkeys than in the Forest. At Hill Top, before the descent into the woods planted by the careful monks 800 years ago, these patient drudges dot the common, gazing pensively at the passer-by. I hear the "cluck! cluck!" of the pheasant again. He seems to say, "My close time is coming, thank God!" He has stuffed himself with acorn this autumn till he can scarcely fly. Through the bare boughs I see his ornished body and

streaming tail
Passing under the
tall Scotch firs, the
wind sends down
a squirrel's cage,
that comes to the
ground almost in
a compact mass,
and breaks into a
lump of dust and
twigs. It is not
dust, for that is
merely matter in
the wrong place,
and this is soon
sent by the wind
to the right one.
It will gather
round the roots of
ferns and bluebells
and primrose, and
disintegrating will
unite with leaf and
debris, and form the
colouring matter of
flowers as yet un-
born. The sun is
sinking behind a
lucid mass of red
cloud. "When Sorley's hammer is heard, rain is coming,"
but to-day no breeze would convey the sound to Beaulieu.
But to talk of Sorley's hammer is to speak of what has passed
away, for the mines of the North have long ago silenced
the smelting furnaces of the Forest. Sorley's hammer will
never be heard again. Here is St. Leonard's Abbey; the old
gable that now serves as a support to a barn was once the
east wall of the monks' refectory. I must push on to Lymington
ere the sun goes down.

I had to make my way back next day after a night when
the wind howled like a demon down the chimney of my bedroom
in the old inn. Breakfast produced such eggs and butter as
Londoners wot not of. The morning was as bright as spring;
the blackbirds and thrushes were calling to each other from the
trees. So rapid was the change that the landscape seemed a
different scene entirely from that I had traversed the day before.
And in Southampton Water, on the long reaches of red-brown
mud in Diben Bay, the seagulls were lying in flocks, perhaps
mending their wings after the disasters of yesterday's storm.

C. E. DE LA POER BERESFORD.

IN THE GARDEN.

THE MIXED BORDER.

A GARDEN without its mixed border, or "herbaceous" as it is
frequently described, because, we suppose, most of the plants
contained in it die down yearly, is not a garden. The border
seems a necessary feature of anything that is called a garden,
and it surely brings back memories of the gardens of old—the
crimson Peonies tumbling over the path in the home surroundings
of our forebears, the silvery Honesty, and tall Lilies, with here and there a
bush of fragrant Lavender or Rosemary. We mention this to bring before
those readers who are without a good mixed border the beauty of such a
feature not only in the spring, summer, or autumn, but in the winter also. Before
the writer is a small border of early flowers. In one corner is a dainty little
colony of the yellow Iris Danfordiae, and not a yard away Snowdrops, Lenten
Roses (Hellebores), Crocus Imperati, the winter Aconite, and Sisyrinchiums
are in full flower; but as the days lengthen and the sun shines with stronger force
the flowers open in profusion. Soon the Daffodils will be in their zenith of
blossoming, and thence onward the border is aglow with colour, until the sweet
tints of the Michaelmas Daisies herald the approach of winter. The month
of March is, as we have already mentioned in these notes, the great month
for gardening work. It is the time to sow annual flowers, to think of the
vegetable crops for the forthcoming season, and also to remember that the
border may be planted with the majority of hardy perennials, for this is the
time to divide the roots, that is, when new growth is beginning. When
the border is already an accomplished fact, it may be necessary to give
fertility to an impoverished soil by a top-dressing of well-decayed manure, and
thoroughly fork it in. Anything like deep digging is fatal, and the reason is
obvious. The soil is full of roots, and when these are destroyed the plants
naturally fail. It is always wise to make a strong feature of annual flowers
in the border. They remain in beauty, when the seed-vessels are picked off
with strict regularity, for many weeks, and fill up the gaps which are
occasioned by the fading of one flower before another is ready to take its
place. When new growth begins divide those clumps of plants which have
become overgrown, and therefore, in a sense, weakly. Nothing is gained by
leaving the plants until the soil is impoverished and the flowers are thin.
A border is not a perennial fixture; it must be renewed when occasion
requires it, and the billowy masses of flowers will be the reward for
sowing until autumn. We advise the planter to put in plenty of early-
flowering Chrysanthemums—the varieties which flower during September,
October, and November in the open garden. The best time for planting
these is early in April, and the list of the varieties required should be sent in



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DENIZENS OF THE FOREST.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

at once. Among the
more important are
the following, all
of the Japanese
race: Harvest Home,
crimson and yellow
in colour; François
Veillermet, rose shaded
with lilac; Mytchett
White; Mme.
Desgranges, one of
the oldest and most
popular of the group;
Roi des Precoces,
deep crimson; Marie
Masse, lilac, and its
crimson-coloured
sport; Ralph Curtis,
cream colour; Mrs.
George Hill, prim-
rose; S. Barlow,
salmon pink; Market
White; Notaire Groz,
pinkish mauve;
Ambroise Thomas,
bronze touched with
red; Mme. La
Comtesse Foucher de
Carie, orange and
red; George Wernig,
deep yellow; and

Ryecroft Glory, bronze and yellow. These are all exceptionally free. The
Pompon varieties are also very beautiful, although the flowers are stiffer
in outline. Of these choose Mme. Jollivart, blush; Mr. Selby, rose lilac;
L'Ami Conderchet, yellow; Alice Butcher, orange shaded with red; Mrs.
Cullingford, white; Lyon, rose purple; Little Bob, crimson and chestnut;
Blushing Bride, lilac and rose; Miss Davis, pink; and Mme. Ed. Lefort,
orange and red. The Chrysanthemum will succeed in ordinary garden soil.

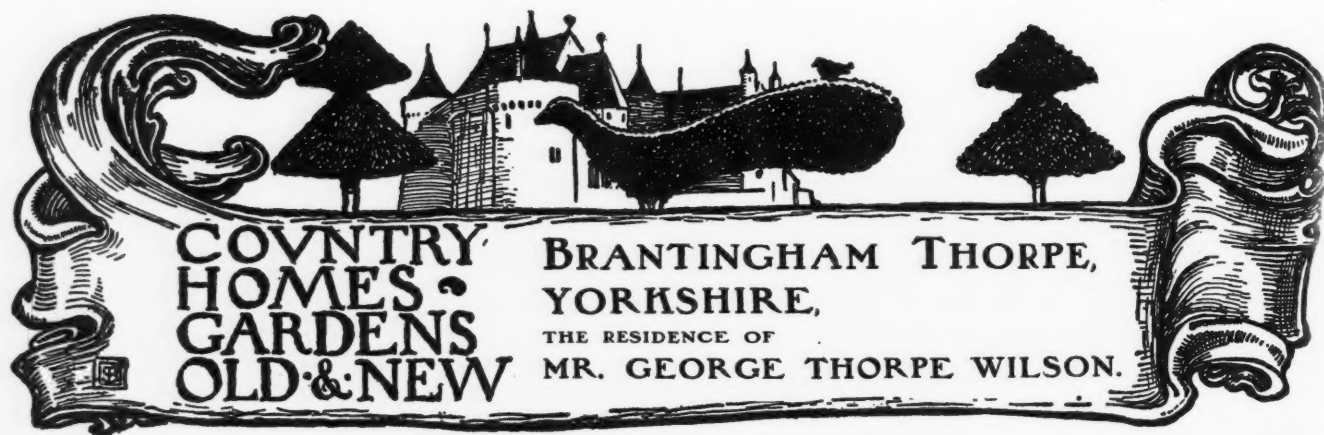
GROUPS OF SWEET PEAS FOR COLOUR

A correspondent asks for a selection of Sweet Peas most suitable for
grouping for colour. It will be found that the following groups of varieties
would do well together: Pink, rose, and white—Prima Donna, Lovely,
Painted Lady, Coccinea, Katherine Tracy, and Dorothy Eckford; blue,
white, and yellow—Navy Blue, Captain of the Blues, Black Knight, Blanche
Burpee, Mrs. Eckford, Hon. Mrs. E. Kenyon, and Mont Blanc; salmon pink,
salmon, and red—Miss Willmott, Gorgeous, Countess of Lathom, Venus,
Salopian, Triumph, Hon. F. Bouverie, and Prince Edward of York; scarlet
and white—Coccinea, Sadie Burpee, and Painted Lady; lilac and white—
Princess May, Lady Grisell Hamilton, Countess Cadogan, and Dorothy Eckford;
crimson, red, rose, and white—Prince of Wales, Salopian, Royal Rose,
Triumph, and Dorothy Eckford; mauve, purple, and white—Dorothy Tennant,
Duke of Westminster, and Dorothy Eckford.

RANDOM NOTES.

Pruning Roses.—The time for Rose pruning is approaching, and we are
reminded of the importance of this by the receipt of a new edition of the late
Rev. Foster Melliar's excellent "Book of the Rose." The information is
severely practical, as the following extract, which is quite appropriate to the
present season, will show (page 96): "A rule for all climbing Roses,
but especially for Maréchal Niel, the Noisettes, and the Dijon Rose, is
that long, strong shoots of the year should not be cut back much, but
either laid in at least three parts of their length or removed altogether.
Unless additional height is wanted, such shoots should not be trained
upright, as that is likely to lead to more wood and less bloom. The Banksian
Roses need special treatment, for the flowers will not proceed from the strong
shoots of the year, but from the lateral or side growths. There must
accordingly not be too much pruning, but merely a thinning out of dead
wood, and a slight shortening of long, strong shoots; the weakly-looking
twigs alone will blossom. Tea Roses, not of the climbing races, which
are grown on low walls, may be pruned more severely if quality rather
than quantity of bloom be desired. March is the month for pruning all
Roses in the open but Teas and Noisettes. . . . It is best to leave Tea
Roses in the open undisturbed till April; and it is safer to leave early-
flowering Hybrid Teas also till that time, especially in situations liable to
May frosts, for it is the early strong shoots, whose buds are already formed,
which suffer most in such visitations."

Planting Carnations.—March is one of the best of months for planting
Carnations, and also for sowing seed. Of recent years Carnation-growers
have relied considerably upon seedlings to give them a harvest of flowers,
and the reason is that seed saved from the finest varieties gives
sorts equal sometimes to, and occasionally more beautiful than, those with
distinct names. There is also the pleasant anticipation of new colours
arising in a bed of seedlings, and every plant is watched eagerly when it is
on the point of blooming. A large number of the seedlings have double
flowers, and even the singles are useful for cutting for the house. Sow the
seed in shallow pans or pots, which should be filled with a soil composed of
loam, leaf-mould, and sharp silver sand. Sift it very finely, and just cover
the seeds with this material. Give a gentle watering through a can with a
fine rose, and place in a cold frame. When the seedlings are making
headway and require more space, prick them out 2 in. apart into other
boxes, and when they are 4 in. or 5 in. high transfer them to the open ground.
It is most important to have ground quite free from wireworms. If named
varieties are desired, make a selection from the following: George Mcquay,
white; Miss Audrey Campbell, yellow; Midas, apricot; Mephisto, the
Old Clove, and Uriah Pike, crimson; Alma, rose; Waterwitch, blush; and
Haidee, heliotrope. We think these are the most successful in the open
garden.



THE attractive old hall of Brantingham Thorpe, Thorpe Brantingham, or Brantingham-cum-Thorpe, as the place has been variously described, stands in a very interesting region of Yorkshire, some two miles north of Brough on the Humber, and within about twelve miles of Kingston-upon-Hull. The great stream of the Humber is to the south of it, bearing upon its broad bosom many rich argosies, and to the north and east of it rise the heights of the Wolds, which from the Humber at Hessle range north-westward to Ripplingham Clump and Hunsley Beacon, and thence to their greatest elevation near Garraby Beacon, 800ft. above the level of the sea. These green hills, high and bare of trees, like all chalk elevations, are neither dreary nor sterile, being broken by smooth, winding, ramified valleys, without channel or stream, which are pleasingly picturesque. Their outlook on this side is towards the south-west, and South Cave and Brantingham are pleasantly situated below the heights. The country is full of history, for ancient Beverley, on the other side of the Wolds, is not far away, and through this country passed a road which the Romans traversed, and along which the legionaries marched from York to the ancient Humber ferry at Brough on their way to Lincoln and the South.

The prosperity of Hull and the advantages of the locality

caused many fine houses to be built in this corner of Yorkshire. It is not, therefore, surprising to find an edifice such as we depict, bearing the unmistakable character of the seventeenth century, and dating, as Brantingham does, from 1671, with, we believe, some older parts. Brantingham Hall was one of those houses in which prosperous gentlemen lived, but its uneventful history is not "writ large" in the chronicles. The county historian is content to mention it, and the guide-book to ignore it altogether; but, none the less, those who love our old architecture, whose delight it is to see houses like this preserved and further beautified, and who glory in beautiful gardens and attractive scenes, will thank us for presenting these admirable pictures of the charming abode. The experienced eye will discern that, though the structure dates from the seventeenth century, it has been enlarged and has undergone many alterations. It was partly reconstructed about the year 1840, but more recently much judicious care has been bestowed upon it, and the architect and gardener have worked hand in hand. There is picturesqueness in the grouping and features of the place which will escape the observation of no one; while the detail is most admirable and beautiful, and the added glory of the gardens, in which experience and taste have wrought a marvel of quaint and attractive form, completes the beauty of the whole.

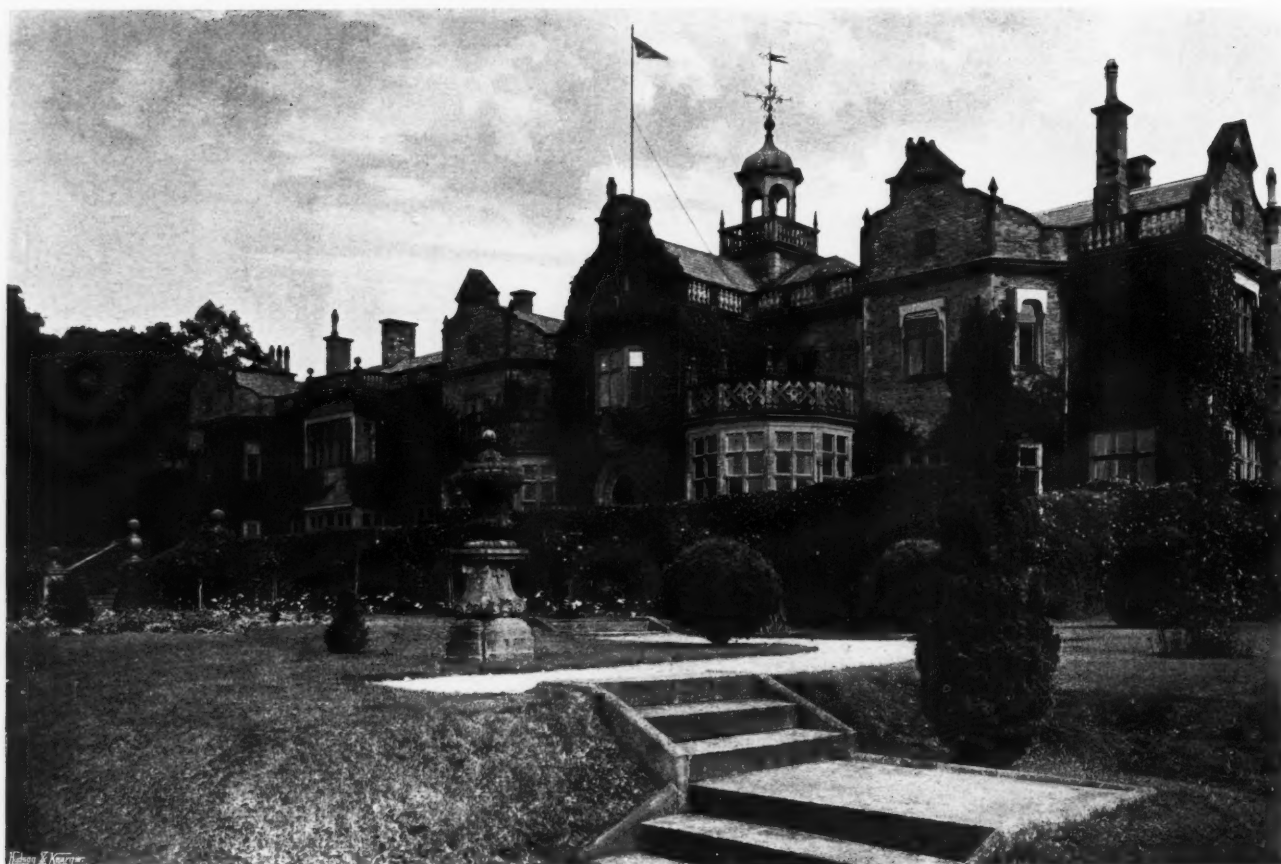




THE WESTERN TERRACE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

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DESCENT TO THE LOWER TERRACE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

Brantingham Thorpe was formerly in possession of the families of Broadley and Barnard, and was purchased from the latter by Mr. Richard Fleetwood Shawe, who was living there about half a century ago. It was afterwards occupied by Mrs. Wade, and more recently has come into the possession of the present owner. A pleasant seat it has been at all times; and now, with added attractions and new architectural forms, standing finely on its bold eminence in the midst of its lovely grounds, and commanding an extensive and beautiful prospect, including venerable Howden, thriving Goole, the Humber, the shore of Lincolnshire, and even the ancient towers of York Minster, it is a place to be loved and admired. It may be appropriate to remark that Yorkshire stands pre-eminent amongst the counties of England for the vast and varied views which it presents to those who take their station on the edge of the Wolds, or the Cleveland Hills, or the great heights which rise east and west of the great Vale of York. From such standpoints the eye may traverse the varied features of far-spread landscapes, melting into the distant haze, and Brantingham Thorpe is an example of a house well placed in a district presenting such advantages.

How pleasant is the situation of the mansion will be seen in the pictures, for there is a descent to the south giving opportunities for terracing, and the whole of the garden on that side is in full view of the principal rooms of the mansion. We would give the house a high place as an example of picturesque architecture in attractive style. The newer work is all judicious, and the old mansion has been ingeniously built up in the later

reconstruction. The idea has been to secure all the light which the southern prospect could give, and the great bays have a wonderful effect in the beautiful interiors. One has been built on either side of the porch entrance, the form being multangular, with many lights formed by moulded mullions and transoms; and the buttresses and perforated crestings have an excellent effect. These features are a great addition to the old structure, and they group admirably with the porch bay, the heraldic animals, the arched doorway, the criel window, and the curvilinear gable, about which the ivy is allowed to cluster. Yet it is to be observed that, though the sturdy climber adds its charm to the house, as do many other of its beautiful aspiring brethren, the architectural features are not hidden, but are, in a sense, emphasised. We counsel all possessors of old or modern houses to exercise a watchful care over the sometimes all-embracing ivy, which, if it be allowed to grow too fast or too far, will not only obscure what it should adorn, but, if it be allowed to root itself in the structure, will end by damaging the masonry.

There is, however, nothing of the kind at Brantingham

Thorpe. The handsome gables rising boldly above the roof-line, the surrounding balustrade, the cupola and excellent chimneys, and, above all, the fine variety in the grouping of the garden front, with its many bays, windows, and recesses, constitute a very engaging architectural creation. The architecture is, moreover, rightly carried into the garden. We should not enter again into the eager debate between the architect and the gardener, but the latter will appreciate the charm of the



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THE EAST WALK.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



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THE DRIVE OUT.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



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FACING SOUTH-WEST.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

simple terracing and the stairways at Brantingham Thorpe. A broad space of gravel extends along the front of the house, with a parapet overlooking the lower garden, to which a stairway descends. On the rising ground to the left of the house, as we stand looking out from the porch, is a woodland distinguished by many very beautiful forest trees, and the sylvan charm extends behind the house and further to the right, where beautiful specimens form a background to the very charming entrance arch.

A most pleasing and picturesque feature does this archway make, with all its Jacobean charm, its Ionic pilasters, pinnacles, and cresting, the excellent balustrade which flanks it, the noble urn, and the yews. Before we close let us note that beautiful French leadwork adds to the garden distinction of the place. Look at that really marvellous example which we illustrate, standing upon a beautiful pedestal and adorned with grotesque masks, fleurs-de-lys, and an admirable cover. Comparable with this noble specimen is the French sundial which stands near the foot of the stairway, where the beautiful gardening along the terrace wall is most sumptuous and attractive. There is also the excellent figure, a piece of sculpture well placed, which is seen in one of our views of the lower garden. The style of the whole place is simple in its elements, and its lovely character is seen to perfection in the pictures, more particularly in those looking towards the west. There are beautiful lawns, fine trees, and pleasant walks wherever we go, and here in the sheltered situation, with a southerly aspect, all things seem to flourish. Not one of the greatest, but certainly one of the most pleasing, of the houses of Yorkshire is Brantingham Thorpe.

THE BRITISH CITY OF PALACES.

FROM the latter days of George II.'s reign, when Beau Nash, as a robust octogenarian, dandled in his arms the future wife of Henry Thrale and friend of Samuel Johnson, then the infant daughter of a prosperous Welsh squire, down to the end of the long and

eventful reign of his grandson (nearly fourscore years later), when "Thrale's grey widow," now "an approved Bath cat," celebrated her eightieth birthday by giving a ball and supper at "The Rooms," with the assistance of a brace of British admirals, at which she footed it with the best, Bath enjoyed an unbroken period of social, literary, and artistic success such as has fallen to no other English provincial city either before or since. It was the Bath of Burke and Boswell, of the first and second William



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FRENCH LEADWORK.

"C.L."

the beauty of its original design in the drawings which are now reproduced on a smaller scale. The river is spanned by three segmental arches of 33ft. span, and the upper part is occupied entirely by shops, which both on the river and the street side were treated in a thoroughly architectural manner, the centre having a fine Venetian window with a pedimented roof over, and the ends being formed by small, square-domed buildings with a four-columned portico in front of each. When these were yet standing as in Malton's view, the entrance to the Bathwick estates must have been as imposing as many of the vistas of an Italian street: while the planning which could blend into one harmonious design the utilitarian scheme of a row of shops and a grand entrance into a city, was worthy of the genius of an Adam. But amidst all its changes, it ceases not to call forth our admiration; and that noble structure, which proved the ruin of its builder, is as proud a relic to the lover of old Bath as a

Ponte Vecchio or a Ponte Rialto is to an Italian of to-day.

If Bath may be described as the City of Palaces in general, she is assuredly the city *par excellence* of ornate portals, one of the best specimens of which is that of Alfred House; exceptional interest centres round this doorway, because it is not only the only one of its kind in Bath, but it has all those surroundings which bring to our mind the customs of our forefathers' days. Built by the younger Wood about 1768, it has



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BRANTINGHAM THORPE; THE FRENCH SUNDIAL.

"C.L."

very little of the severe characteristics of that fine pile of buildings, the Assembly Rooms, which it fronts. Indeed, it seems to form a link between the more masculine style of the elder Wood's days and the decadent period which was shortly to follow. There is much here to remind us that a softening influence had touched the strong hand of the architect, and had made him fashion his ornament and detail with an almost feminine grace and charm. Though there is no reason to doubt that the younger Wood was the designer of this doorway, yet there is a freedom and delicacy about it which is quite unlike his usual work, and this is seen in the festoons on the frieze and the pendants below the brackets, while the general details and enrichments appear smaller than usual. The ironwork is a specimen of great beauty, for the smiths' work has lost little of the vigour of its early days, and the care with which it is wrought, and the trouble bestowed upon the hammered foliage,

must make us blush for the flimsy, wiry productions of a rushing age. In the centre at the top once stood the oil lamp, and the extinguishers for the link-boys' torches are fixed on either side just above the railing. Having disposed so satisfactorily of the material setting and surroundings of Bath society in the Augustan epoch of its existence, it is not astonishing to learn that Mr. Gregory hopes to follow up his well-deserved and generally-acknowledged success by a series of books dealing in detail with its various phases, commencing most appropriately with the Orchard Street Theatre (now the Bath Masonic Hall), which remains to-day, substantially at any rate, just as it was when Mrs. Siddons and Henderson "took their benefits," Edwin and Parsons convulsed their audiences with laughter, and R. B. Sheridan waited in fear and trembling to know whether Bath had confirmed the verdict of Drury Lane as to the merits of "The School for Scandal."

R. K. Y.

ANGLO-SAXON DRINKING GLASSES.

TIMES have changed since drinking was a religious ceremony; in fact, during the last two thousand years special occasions have been systematically turned into so many excuses for a drink. Thus Horace celebrates the anniversary of his escape from a falling tree with a libation and a feast to Bacchus:

"Hic dies anno redeunte festus
Corticem adstrictum pice dimovebit
Amphoræ, fumum bibere institutæ
Consule Tullo."

But the poet's delight seems to have been rather in the contemplation of the luscious wine than in the consumption of it—a point which shows the difference between him and our Anglo-Saxon forefathers. Beowulf wastes no words on the dreamy side of drink. He goes, in good old Anglo-Saxon fashion, straight to the practical point:

"The thane observed his office,
He that in his hand bare
The twisted ale-cup."

The same contrast is observed when one considers the difference in the cups. No delicately-stemmed cup of gold for



ANGLO-SAXON DRINKING HORN WITH WROUGHT MOUNTS.

the Anglo-Saxon. He always used a glass or horn without a stand, so that once filled the vessel must be emptied before being set down. Hence the old proverb, "When the wine is poured out it must be drunk," and the modern word "tumbler," to denote a drinking glass.

At first the Anglo-Saxons used a horn; and long after glass cups were introduced for use amongst the upper classes the horn still retained its semi-religious character in transactions with regard to land. Inheritances of land passed by the transfer of a horn, and estates were held in fee by the same means. For example, the famous horn of Ulphus. The story is, briefly, that Ulphus intended to divide his estate amongst his sons before his death. The sons, however, quarrelled so much about their respective shares that the old man made a journey to York Cathedral, where, having made certain vows, he filled his drinking horn with wine, and, kneeling before the altar, drank off the contents in a breath in token that he gave his land for ever to the Church. That was in the time of Canute. Many of the horns were worked beautifully with gold and silver, one fine example being in the British Museum at the present time.

With the introduction of glasswork in A.D. 600, when Abbot Benedict brought foreign workmen over, changes were made in the shape of the drinking vessels, although amongst the higher classes bone cups were already in use. The bone cups could not so easily be fashioned into any shape, but they suggested ideas to Anglo-Saxon glass-workers, even to those who presumably had not been taught by the abbot's men. That the Anglo-Saxons had not learned glasswork from the Romans seems to be proved by the fact that their glass was lighter than that of Roman make and inferior in quality, being



THE EARLIEST GLASS TUMBLER.

subject to the decay which destroys transparency and produces those peculiar iridescent tints that are to be seen in nearly every Anglo-Saxon specimen in the British Museum.

The shapes of the glass cups present a remarkable variety. Some are conical, the foot being the apex of the cone. At first these glasses seem to have been quite plain, the earliest kind of decoration consisting of spiral bands of glass fixed to the outside of the cup while in a semi-molten condition. This kind of glass is the one to which Beowulf refers as the "twisted ale-cup" in the lines already quoted.

All manner of decorations were subsequently introduced, many beautiful pieces of workmanship being preserved in the British Museum. Semi-spherical cups have been very frequently found, but nearly always in graves containing female remains or ornaments. These cups could only be held comfortably in the hollow of the hand, as the old drawings show them to have been, and they appear to have been used chiefly by women. At any rate, all the specimens in the British Museum are much smaller than the cone and horn shaped glasses, some being so tiny as to suggest the idea that they were used by the children of the wealthy. In a village near Sandwich thirty bowl-shaped cups were found and preserved by a local farmer, who had them brought out to drink from in celebration of the harvest home, the cups thus reverting to their original use after a lapse of nearly ten centuries.

The use of glasses without feet has been considered a sufficient reason for accusing our forefathers of drinking propensities; and certainly nothing short of a brilliant capacity could empty some of those old glasses at a breath. It is, however, some little comfort to know that glasses as unstable and as large have frequently been discovered on the Continent, particularly in the French cemeteries. Besides, we have no definite information as to the quality of the drink. Mead seems to have existed before ale, if we may judge from the notes of Pytheas, who does not mention the latter. Nothing would be less surprising than that the

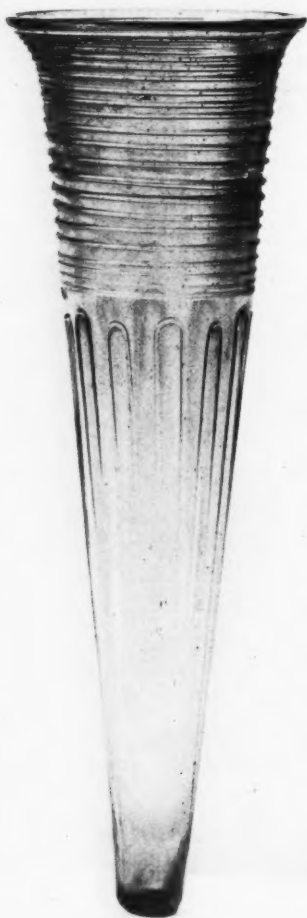
various months, and contains pictures of the process of making wine. In April there is a picture of three people sitting on a dais, holding round-bottomed cups, while an attendant is filling a horn from a tankard, and a servant is in the act of draining a gigantic horn. From this it would appear that, in the eleventh century at any rate, the lower classes drank ale or mead from horns, while the upper classes had wine, and possibly superior qualities of ale, in cups of bone and glass. Space forbids a more minute description of Anglo-Saxon drinking glasses, and no amount of description could raise so vivid an idea of old-time homes and feasts as an hour or two in the British Museum, in the Anglo-Saxon room. But, finally, consider—and well worth a little thought it is—a scrap of Anglo-Saxon lore, prompted, no doubt, by the experience of the bitter brawls which took place in olden days, "when the wine was in" and the "wit was out": "Wine is not the drink of children or the weak-minded, but of the elders and the wise."

Saxon should evolve a decoction more or less "malty" from the wheat and honey mixture. Whatever the origin of ale may have been, it is certain that several kinds were manufactured. Even in King Alfred's time houses for the sale of liquor existed, into which priests were forbidden to enter; and we know that certain kinds were used at certain ceremonies, as, for example, the bride-ale, which was specially brewed for the consumption of the guests, after they had partaken of the great loaf specially made by the bride. Poor little bride! Perhaps "rinse" was necessary some times. Wine, too, was made in England at that time, although here again we do not know much of the quality. The manufacture was mostly carried on in the monasteries, the process being rather primitive. In the Cotton Library is a curious old manuscript, the Saxon Calendar, written partly in Latin, partly Saxon, on the interlinear method, apparently for the instruction of the Saxon youth in the former tongue. The book consists of a list of the things to be done on a farm, etc., in the



GLASS TUMBLER DRINKING VESSEL.

(About A.D. 625-650.)



ANGLO-SAXON GLASS DRINKING HORN.



ELABORATE GLASS DRINKING HORN.

THE EGGS OF INSECTS.

BIRDS' nests and eggs are a never-failing source of interest to all students of Nature, and the periodicals devoted to natural history, or rural topics, teem with literary and photographic studies of this subject.

Although so many people collect, or, at least, take an interest in, birds' eggs, very few even give a thought to the eggs of insects, and a still smaller number have any idea of their beauty and variety. Perhaps the chief reason for the little interest taken in these beautiful objects is the necessity for observing them with the aid of a microscope or powerful magnifying-glass, as the eggs are in many cases barely visible to the naked eye.

Insects' eggs can be found at all seasons of the year, but they are, of course, more plentiful in spring and summer than in winter. A careful searching of plants, fences, etc., will, in spring and summer, result in a varied collection of specimens, and anyone who owns even a low-power microscope will have an interesting series of eggs for examination. The eggs of insects differ in one respect particularly from those of birds; the latter

are practically all of the same shape, variety being chiefly noticeable in colour and size, while the former have, generally speaking, a uniform colour, or absence of colour, but possess an endless variety of form and structural ornamentations. A photomicrograph of several types of insects' eggs, arranged *en masse* for the purpose of exhibiting their variety of form, is given here, and the interesting nature of the study of these objects can be seen at a glance. The ova of butterflies and moths are particularly noticeable in the variety of form and the delicate tracery on the surface of the eggs.



EGGS OF PARASITE OF TURKEY.

Two of the most curious types are shown in the eggs of the parasite peculiar to the White-crested Kalegee and of the *Ennomos Tiliaria*. The eggs of birds require the aid of the parent bird for incubation, but with insects the eggs hatch out automatically at the proper season. In some cases, a few hours or days only are required, while in others the eggs remain unhatched through the winter, to incubate in the following spring. In this respect the ova of insects bear a curious resemblance to the seeds of plants. The eggs of the silkworm, for instance, remain unhatched through the warm days of autumn, but will hatch out in the comparatively cool weather of an English spring. The aphides of early spring are incubated from eggs which have lain

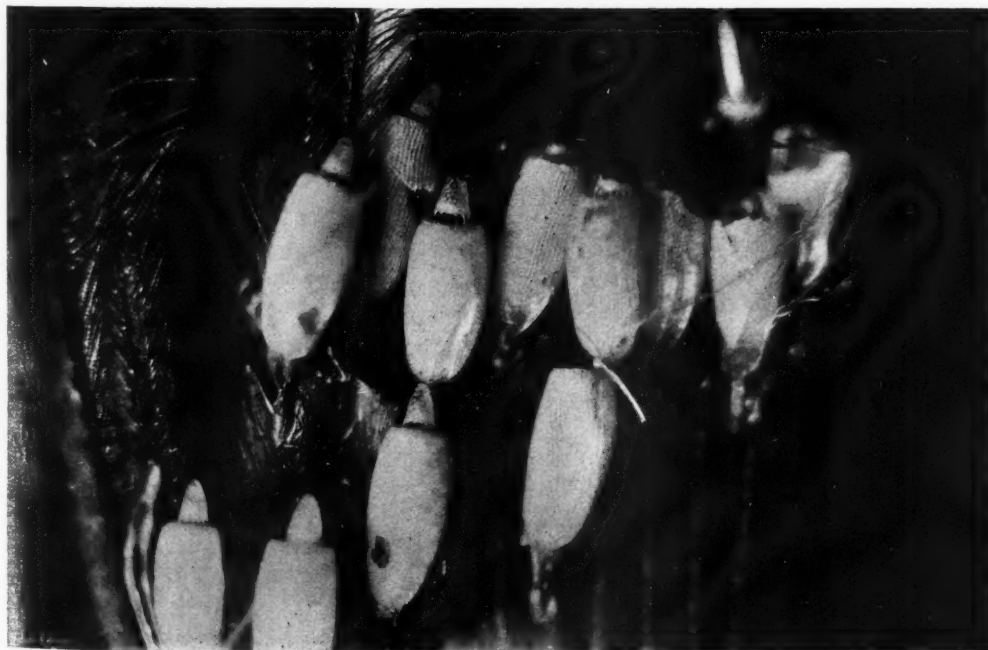
dormant through the winter. These spring-hatched aphides are all of one sex, and, instead of breeding from eggs, become viviparous, and the early succeeding generations emerge as fully-developed insects. In late summer and autumn aphides of both sexes are produced, and from these are developed the eggs that are destined to remain unhatched through the winter and supply the first generation of aphides in the following spring. The honey bee under certain conditions has a somewhat similar habit of breeding independently of the male insect. Most people who keep bees are aware of the fact that when a hive loses the queen, and no eggs or young larvæ remain to supply a fresh one,



EGGS OF PARASITE OF PHEASANT.

an ordinary worker bee sometimes becomes fertile. In this case the worker bee lays only drone eggs; consequently, the hive becomes, in course of time, depopulated.

The eggs of parasites of animals exhibit very curious forms, and often possess most elaborately-marked surfaces. The eggs of bird parasites are generally elongated, with surface indentations of regular lines and dots. The eggs, in some cases, adhere to the feathers of the bird by a mass of adhesive matter at the base of the eggs; under the microscope this gives the effect of fruit growing on a branch. This is well seen in the case of the eggs of the parasite which affects the feathers of the pheasant. In most cases, however, the whole surface of the eggs when first laid is of an adhesive nature, which securely fastens it to any substance on which it may be deposited. The egg of the common fly is of a very curious form, and is divided longitudinally into three portions, the centre portion in shape and perforations resembling an incandescent gas mantle. One of the turkey parasites lays eggs which closely resemble a chrysanthemum. A group of



EGGS OF PARASITE OF GROUND HORNBILL.

moths' eggs reproduced here shows, perhaps, the most curious shape of any, the specimens resembling a group of bricks. As will be seen by the accompanying photomicrographs, insect eggs are nearly always white, though some species lay eggs of a darker shade. J. I. Pigg.

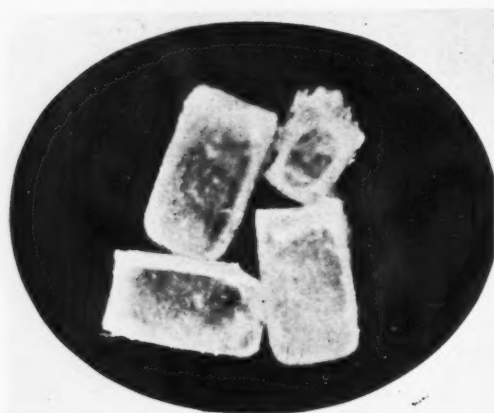
EBB & FLOW OF POPULATION.

SOME of the aspects of the shifting of the population in consequence of increased ease of locomotion are so obvious as hardly to be worth notice. They are so obvious, that perhaps other aspects of that shifting that do not so immediately "jump to the eye" are thrown a little more into the background of the picture than a due sense of the general perspective warrants. The aspect that is most apparent, and on which most attention is concentrated, is the constant tendency of the rural population to drift into the towns. A recent lecture given by Mr. A. H. Anderson before the Society

EGGS OF HOUSE FLY.

of Arts was mainly occupied with another aspect, the depletion of the small country towns by the suction of great cities. Some of the statistics that he quoted were quite remarkable. There are also other tendencies, in

centuries. Each advance in locomotive facilities has had the natural effect of making the centre relatively more, the points on the circumference relatively less, important. The original nucleus of the country town was either ecclesiastical or industrial, taking the latter term in the comprehensive sense of including the produce both of manufacture and of agriculture. More occasionally it owed its birth to the former presence of a feudal castle, and was an outgrowth of the collection of the retainers of the feudal lord. It is too often forgotten, in considering the evolution of social conditions in Great Britain, that, comparatively a few decades ago, the greater part of the kingdom was virtually without roads. You might draw a cross on the map of England, going roughly north and south and west and east, with London at the junction, and that would represent for you the extent of even possible accommodation for wheeled vehicles during certainly the greater part of the year. Elsewhere, for many months annually

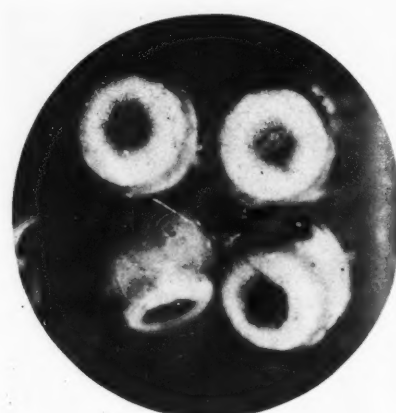


EGGS OF MOTH (*ENNOMOS TILIARIA*).

an opposite direction, which a survey of the entire question brings to light, such as the expansion from the centre of cities to the suburbs and into the neighbouring country districts, all of which movements are to be classed among those directly due to the increased, and the constantly-increasing, ease of locomotion which improvements in mechanism and in command of the forces of Nature are constantly effecting.

The figures quoted by Mr. Anderson in the lecture mentioned above, are based on a comparison of the last two census returns. Out of 666 districts it is found that the population has decreased in no less than 421; and in 187 towns of from 2,000 to rather more than 50,000 inhabitants there has also been a decrease. Going into closer detail, it is found that of towns with a population of from 10,000 to 20,000 one in ten shows

a decrease, of towns from 5,000 to 10,000 there is a decrease of one in seven, and of one in three of those whose inhabitants number from 2,000 to 5,000. The inevitable inference from these figures is that the bigger centres are tending to absorb the less, and this is shown not only by the fact of the absolute decrease in the population of some of these country towns, but also by the fact that the ratio of decrease is so much higher for the smaller than for the larger of the towns taken as instances. The decline of the relative importance of the country town is far from being a new feature in the social and commercial economy of the kingdom. It forms part of a general alteration in values that has been in progress not only for decades, but for centuries.



EGGS OF VAPOURER MOTH.



EGGS OF PARASITE OF WHITE-CRESTED KALEGEE.

people did not move about, or, if at all, did so on horseback. There was no alternative. A little more than a hundred years ago some improvement began, and early in the nineteenth century stage-coach or post travellers were blessing the name of Macadam and swearing at the expense of the turnpikes. The immobile conditions prevailed longer in Scotland than in England, although even in the latter part of the kingdom all real improvement is of fairly recent date; and perhaps it is from Scottish accounts that we gather the best idea of how pleasant and how different the

conditions of life in the county town must have been at a time when the neighbouring county gentry as a matter of course made their winter quarters in their county town, having a town house there, or a lodging to which they repaired annually, just as now for the most part they have their house or their favourite hotel in London. The little burgh of Montrose may be taken as a typical instance, and records of the life of the country gentry within its walls in the long and severe winters of the Scottish East Coast have been preserved by contemporary writers up to a comparatively late date. Subsequently, it became the mode to go to Edinburgh instead of to the Scottish county towns for the winter season, and only when the railway made the journey a matter of relatively very little moment did the Scottish gentry think of a London season. Railways and steam-engines have been the great agents in the change, and they have made a change in more ways than one. Not only have they put rural districts within easy touch of urban life in the provinces, and the provincial towns within easy reach of the metropolis, but they have in many cases diverted the stream from its former course; and in this way we find villages that are directly on the line of the rails and close to a station increasing rapidly, at the expense of a neighbouring town which used to be of much greater importance, but which for some reason it is not convenient for the railway to touch.

All this shows the operation of agencies tending to the focussing of population in great cities. On the other hand, the increased ease and increased quickness of locomotion over relatively small distances has the opposite tendency of dispersing population from the centres. It is a tendency that is constantly becoming more apparent, but is often not yet observed. The most striking instance is that of the City of London itself, where the number of residential houses is very small in comparison with the olden times when merchants used to live over their counting-houses. Nowadays the merchant may possibly live in the West End; more probably he will live in some suburban area extending to a radius of twelve or twenty miles. Occasionally his home will be as far away as Brighton, whence he thinks nothing of coming to the City at least five days in the week. Similarly the merchants and tradesmen in other large cities are more and more disposed to live outside these crowded and highly-rated areas, and to have small country houses or villas, whence they can easily reach their places of business by train. And what is done in this large way by the merchants is done in a smaller way, but always, as the speed of



THE EGGS OF INSECTS: GROUPS OF VARIOUS TYPES.

locomotion increases and its cost diminishes, in a growing way, by clerks and all the humbler retainers of commerce and labour. Doubtless a very natural desire to escape from the excessive rates in the great centres is a motive that drives many of these out of the cities; but a much more general motive is the wholesome desire to escape, for some waking hours, at all events, as well as for the hours of sleep, from the crowded city into some semblance of Nature's country; and it is a motive that the ever-growing interest in all natural objects is likely to bring into more and more active operation. Add to this the virtual certainty that the ease and cheapness of locomotion will still further be increased, and it must be acknowledged that, though the tendency which draws the rural inhabitants and dwellers in small towns into the big cities is the more obvious of those which the constant improvement in means of communication is producing, there is also a tendency in the opposite direction, which is produced by the same cause, and that this opposite tendency is, on the whole, the more likely to develop largely in the future.

OLD-TIME SPORT AT THE BAVARIAN COURT.

WHEN Amling, A.D. 1692, drew the spirited pictures of which our first two illustrations are reproductions, he was Court engraver and Court designer for tapestry to the Dukes of Bavaria, dynasts keenly addicted to every kind of sport.

The originals, now in the possession of the writer, are tinted drawings, the finished details of which show the master's attention to minute details so essential to the engraver, and for this reason they may be of interest to those to whom the time-honoured sport of hawking is an ever-attractive field of research.

Amling, occasionally spelt also Ambling, though I have not come across any signature of his showing the latter spelling, was born in 1651 at Nürnberg. He learnt the art of engraving on copper at the expense of the art-loving Elector Max II. at the studio of the well-known de Poilly at Paris. Of his engravings only very few deal with sport, while many of his designs for tapestry—and probably the above two drawings were such—represent sporting scenes. Hawking was then still one of the favourite

pastimes at the Bavarian Court, the opportunities to indulge in it in close vicinity to Munich being particularly favourable.

Kite and heron hawking were, as in other countries, the two principal pursuits of the Court falconer, and we gain some insight into details, and some idea of the ardour with which the sport was conducted, when we learn that in the twenty-five years from 1730 to 1755 the following enormous quantity of game was bagged by them: 1,763 kites, 4,174 herons, 4,857 crows, 1,647 magpies, 14,087 partridges, 985 pheasants, 398 wild ducks, 5,059 hares, etc., in all 34,429 head! Under some of these Royal falconers silver and gold pieces were specially minted for rewarding the servants of the great establishments that were specially devoted to falconry. They bore on one side a falcon circumscribed by the legend "Elatus tendet in altum," and "Oblectamina principis." And, though the Bavarian dukes' "mews" were not as extensive as were some of the French kings'—Francis I. had fifty Masters of Falcons and no less than 300 falcons of various kinds—they were still sufficiently large,

and, as we hear from many a plaint from the starving peasantry, entailed great expense and many burdensome duties. Curiously enough, hawking was pursued in Bavaria rather later in the spring than elsewhere.

It was the custom every year to liberate a heron that had been recovered alive from the talons of its captor, after putting round one of its legs a silver ring, upon which was engraved the year and the name of the prince who had captured it. We hear of some curious instances of such marked herons having been retaken, often after the interval of many years, and, in some instances, after more than half a century. Thus a marked heron, freed by Elector Ferdinand, was taken by his grandson, Elector Charles Albert, almost sixty years later. And, again, King Frederick III. of Prussia took a heron bearing a ring placed on the bird's leg by his ancestor, Elector William, proving that this heron must have been between fifty and sixty years of age. But the most curious incident of this kind is

narrated of a bird that was taken by the King of Poland, in 1751, at Moritzburg, the famous hunting castle of the Kings of Saxony. It bore two rings, indicating that it had been taken ten years before by him, and seven years previously by the Sultan of Turkey. A third ring was placed on the bird's leg, but history does not relate that it was again heard of.

In the first of our pictures we may infer, from the presence of an owl on the attendant's fist, that the duchess is bent upon kite-hawking, which was generally considered the princeliest of all hawking, for the flight of the soaring kite was a particularly difficult one. The saker was the bird commonly used for this sport; but it is clear that in this instance the equally efficient, and better-known, gerfalcon was to be used, for there can be little doubt that the three birds on the cage are intended for that species.

The second illustration shows us heron-hawking, with the usual incidents of that sport to which it is hardly necessary to



THE DUCHESS OF BAVARIA OUT HAWKING.

(From a Picture by Amling.)



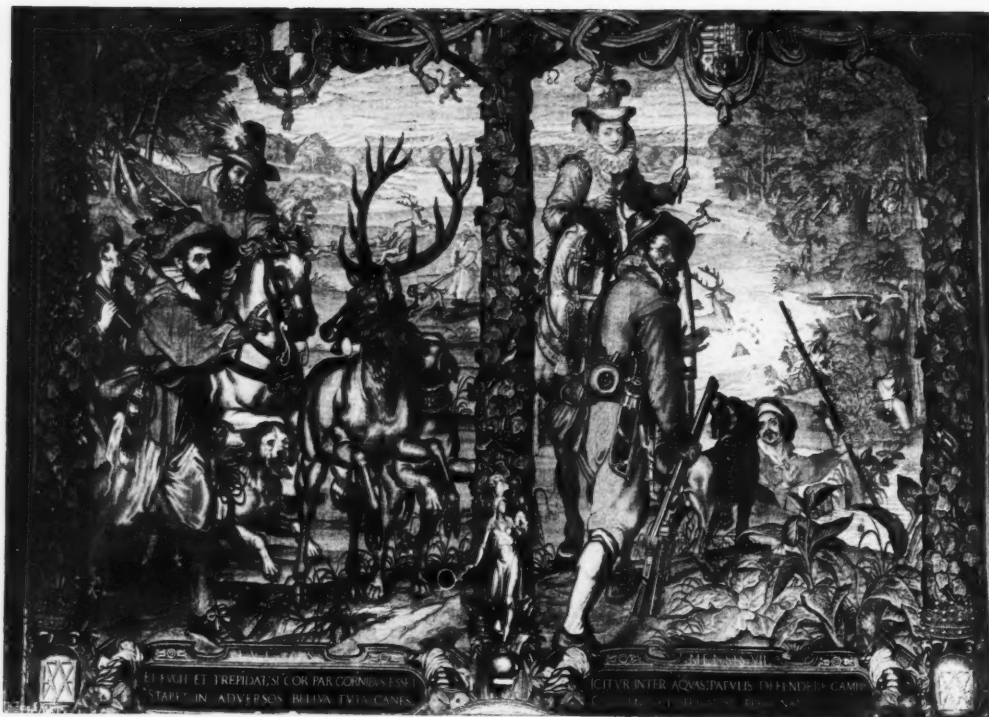
HAWKING IN BAVARIA IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

(From a Picture by Amling.)

refer at any length. Our third picture is a photographic reproduction from a fine piece of tapestry preserved in the National Museum at Munich, for which Amling furnished the design. Here we see a fair huntress who bears a striking resemblance to the one in our first illustration, though in this instance she is engaged in hunting and not in hawking. It is one of a series of tapestry panels on which the sports of the twelve months are depicted, the one before us being that appertaining to the month of July. Our next illustration is reproduced from one of Ridinger's engravings, works to which considerable space has been devoted in these columns on previous occasions. It speaks for itself, and what space there is left must be given to a brief explanation of our last illustration; it represents one of the great formal royal stag-hunts held in the first half of the eighteenth century at the Bavarian Court, a subject of which the National Museum in Munich possesses two interesting paintings. Our reproduction is taken from one of them. The hunt took place on the shores of the Staremberg Lake, near Munich. Hotly

pursued by a large pack of staghounds, under the personal guidance of the Elector himself, a great hart of fourteen—in the large painting one can easily distinguish the antlers—was forced to "soil," viz., to take to the lake near to the spot where the great state barge, an exact copy in every detail of the famous Bucentaur of the Doge of Venice, was stationed. Other barges and smaller gondola-like boats guided the course of the swimming stag towards the former, and when finally the exhausted animal was close to it he was roped and drawn aboard, where, after being killed, or, to use the old English term we find in the "Master of Game," "spayed," the right fore leg at the knee-joint was cut off and presented to the Electress, after which the whole court witnessed the *curée*, or rewarding of the hounds, one of the most ancient, as well as the most attractive, of the many ceremonies of venery.

This was the age when sport degenerated to a mere pageant of stage effects and ludicrous mummery. Princes in those days tried to outrival each other in inventing bizarre *coups de théâtre*,



AMLING'S DESIGN CARRIED OUT IN TAPESTRY.



HERON-HAWKING, BY RIDINGER.

full of the most fantastic extravagances. Huge wooden temples were built with flights of stairs leading up to galleries—in one instance to a height of 240ft.—and up these stairways the driven stags and wild boar were forced to take their flight, to be shot while progressing up these artificial mountains by the royal sportsmen and their guests, who were hidden behind masked ambuscades. On other occasions stags were forced through tunnels and grotto-like caves, where life-size statues of Diana in the grotesque costume of the age—perukes and Watteau gowns—held garlands of roses, over which the stags had to leap as if they were skipping-ropes. While other great princes, equally in the thralldom of a degenerate fashion, made stags pass under triumphal arches, where rosaries were thrown over their antlers before reaching the raised stands from where they were shot down, the noble Nimrod being often seated in a comfortable arm-chair. One record of a royal hunt about that time is interesting, for it shows what the shooting in those flintlock days was like. On the occasion in question, the visit of Emperor Francis I. of Germany to Prince Colloredo, one of the great magnates of Bohemia, there were killed at the expenditure of 116,600 shots 62,831 head of game, consisting of: 3,216 red deer, 1,710 wild boar, 932 foxes, 13,243 hares, 29,545 partridges, 9,489 pheasants, 1,353 quails, 1,967 woodcock, 513 wild duck, and 863 other fowl. There were present twenty-one guns and three princesses, though it is not quite clear whether the latter participated in the slaughter. Probably they did, for there were in those days some great sportswomen among the Continental aristocracy, as witness the performance of Princess Eleonore of Schwarzenberg, who on September 27th, 1732, stalked and killed twelve warrantable stags during the rut, among them an eighteen-pointer.

W. A. BAILLIE-GROHMAN.

A BOOK OF THE WEEK.

THE literary event of the week is the publication of a new book by Mrs. Humphry Ward. *The Marriage of William Ashe* (Smith, Elder) is a novel that will yield the greatest pleasure to the admirers of the authoress, as it is as fine a specimen of her work as has yet been produced. It is a novel of high political society, the hero being an aspirant to political honours, who is in close touch with the Prime Minister of the day, and

whose friends lie among the thinkers and politicians. He is, indeed, an excellent specimen of the English aristocrat, a man of fortune and good family. Withal there is a gaiety in his disposition that makes the outsider think very often that he is not taking matters seriously, though, as a matter of fact, this is only a cloak to a very deep and earnest nature. It is probably on the principle of extremes meeting that this young Englishman falls in love with the heroine of the story, Lady Kitty Bristol, a young girl of eighteen, who has been educated abroad, and whose mother, Mme. d'Estrées, has a certain shadiness in her character and surroundings. The girl is more French than English as far as disposition goes. Beautiful, impulsive, kind, she has none of the principles sedulously instilled into the average English girl, does not, for example, think it in the slightest degree immoral to run into debt, nor does she dream of denying herself anything that money can procure. In English Society she is very much like a fish out of water, and is constantly outraging the proprieties. Her first appearance, indeed, in Society is when she arrives late for dinner, overdressed in the French style, and bearing in her arms a tempestuous little terrier puppy. But between her and William Ashe a mutual attraction makes itself felt immediately, and he constitutes himself her defender, with results that easily may be foreseen. In the first book he marries her, full of love, but without any of the hallucinations to which lovers are subject. Still, the experiment is a doubtful and difficult one. It is in the development of Kitty's character under the influence of marriage that Mrs. Humphry Ward finds her main theme. The young girl has come into a position for which she has but slender equipment. A model wife would have made the interests of her husband her own, and have sacrificed every personal inclination that interfered with the realisation of his ambition. Unfortunately, she is not built that way. On the contrary, she is swayed hither and thither by every whim and impulse that crosses her mind. Even the consolation that children bring is denied her. Her eldest son comes into the world a cripple, and her feeling for him is as much that of repugnance as of passion. So in the end she begins to seek for amusement outside the domesticities, or, in other words, embarks on a career of flirtation that is audacious, though, at the beginning at least, perfectly harmless. Obviously it was not a line of conduct in any way calculated to advance the interests of her husband. On the contrary, it damages them, and, being absolutely reckless as to whom she offends, she is not long in getting him into hot water with the Prime Minister of the day. In the meantime Geoffrey Cliffe, who has played a subordinate part in the early stages of the story, begins to assume the part of an important personage. He is a semi-literary sort of politician, who in his time has had many affairs with women which do not redound much to his credit. At first she only amuses herself with him, but he, fired by the enthusiasm of quest, carries matters beyond the point of strict propriety. The patience of Ashe under these circumstances is exemplary. Cliffe had taken her up the river, and when they missed a train, proposed that she should throw her husband over. She fled from him, and how she spent the night may be gathered from the following passage:

"'It's all very well,' said Kitty, as she nestled down among the pillows, 'but we're none of us feathers!'

Her eyes were beginning to recover a little of their sparkle. She looked at him with attention.

'You look horribly tired. What—what did you do—last night?' She turned away from him.

'I sat up reading—then went to sleep downstairs. I thought the coach had come to grief—and you were somewhere with the Alcots.'

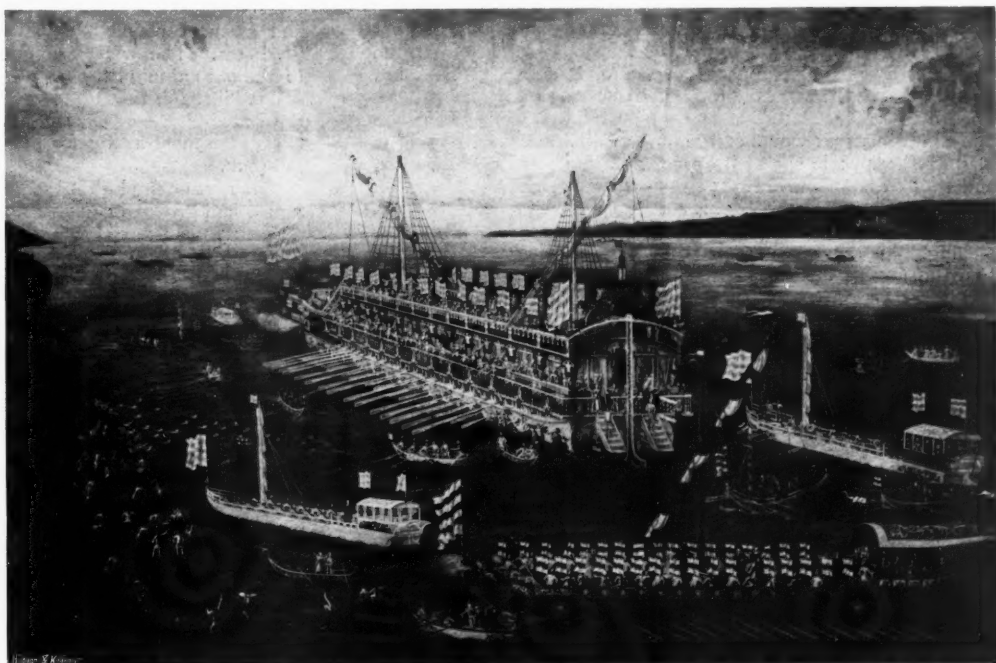
'If I had known that,' she murmured, 'I might have gone to sleep. Oh, it was so horrible!—the little stuffy room—and the dirty blankets.' She gave a shiver of disgust. 'There was a poor baby, too, with whooping cough. Lucky I had some money. I gave the woman a sovereign. But she wasn't at all nice. She never smiled once. I know she thought I was a bad lot.'

But it was her fate to step from one indiscretion into another. In one of the best passages in the book, one instinct with

divination of the feminine character, Mrs. Humphry Ward describes what Kitty felt after the reconciliation:

"He spoke with manly kindness and reasonableness. Not a trace of his habitual indolence or indifference. Kitty, listening, was conscious of the most tempestuous medley of feelings—love, remorse, shame, and a strange, gnawing desolation. What else, what better, could she have asked of him? And yet, as she looked at him, she thought suddenly of the moonlit garden at Grosville Park, and of that young headlong chivalry with which he had thrown himself at her feet. This man before her—so much older and maturer—counting the cost of his marriage with her in the light of experience, and magnanimously, resolutely paying it; Kitty, in a flash, realised his personality as she had never yet done, his moral independence of her, his separateness as a human being. Her passionate self-love instinctively, unconsciously, had made of his life the appendage of hers. And now—? His devotion had never been so plain, so attested; and all the while bitter, terrifying voices rang upon the inner ear, voices of fate, vague and irrevocable."

Unfortunately, to relieve the desolation that came upon her, she hits upon the dangerous expedient of trying to write a book, and this eventually leads to disaster, although we must anticipate a little in saying so, for into the volume she thrust Cabinet secrets which had been talked over in what should have been the sacred confidence of man and wife; she put little intimate details about the Prime Minister which she had learned while acting as his hostess; and, in a word, behaved in the manner of an American woman of the baser sort. Yet in all this she was innocent,



A GREAT HUNT AT THE BAVARIAN COURT.

How the stag was driven into the lake.

acting impulsively, and apparently unable to realise for herself the dishonour she was bringing on her husband and his household. What the end of it all was bound to be may be guessed without help. It is as if Fate's limping foot was following her, so that she passed from disaster to disaster, till Death, the final reconciler, came and ended all her troubles. Such is a bare outline of the story which Mrs. Humphry Ward has placed before her readers. In it she has outshone any previous work of hers, and yet from the artistic point of view there is much to ask for. This is a most introspective novel; for pages and pages we are told not what people did under certain circumstances, but what they thought, just as the old-fashioned dramatist, when he wished to explain his psychology, made his characters soliloquise. Only Mrs. Humphry Ward does the soliloquising for her people, and, of course, the effect is not nearly so good as it would have been if she had been able to narrate only the most pregnant of their actions, but in such a way that the reader for himself would have divined the line of thought. It is a fault to which the ordinary feminine mind is subject; but we had some right to expect that Mrs. Humphry Ward would have risen above it. Novelists can make no greater mistake than that of attempting to say all, so that nothing is left for the reader to imagine or divine. It is much higher art, because it produces a more interesting result, to say only those things which produce activity in the mind of him or her who reads. Yet, when fault-finding has said its worst, the authoress may very well be congratulated on this novel. It is a wonderful study of a very exceptional and fine temperament, and arouses our compassion without making any direct appeal to it. For the pathos of the whole situation is that the young girl never sins against the light. She does nothing consciously

wrong, but is simply swept along by the wind of the destiny that is born of her temperament, and so it is with the rest of the *dramatis personæ*. As we read Mrs. Humphry Ward's final motto we feel something of the inevitableness of Greek tragedy:

"Pluck, pluck cypress, O pale maidens,
Dusk the hall with yew."

THE SAMPHIRE.

MANY flowers delight us by their beauty, and many by their sweetness; but some there are that move us in more spiritual fashion. We see in them some quality of grace, of faith, of courage, or endurance, that appeals to the imagination. It is generally a wild flower that has this power, and often a flower or plant that is common and quite homely. The samphire of the rock is one. Like the edelweiss, the samphire grows in inaccessible places, and has something of the same wild charm. We prize the woolly little alpine flower, because it blooms among the wrack of higher clouds and glacier winds. If we had found it growing easily in sheltered meadows, among the bleating of sheep, and lowing of cattle, and winding of silver streams, we should never have placed a halo round its head; it would be no more to us than a daisy or a buttercup.

The samphire is the English edelweiss. It, too, grows out of reach, on giddy heights above the scalloped edges of the sea, where salt winds blow and seagulls scream, and not another weed is there to bear it company. Like some recluse of old, the samphire dwells in stony solitudes, and, like a roadside saint, goes fasting. It must fast in a place where there is so little for a plant to feed on, but, like many a human saint, it thrives on fare that other folk would starve on. And where it is the little plant is happy; in spring it opens wide its cheerful yellow eyes, and wins fresh savour from the very stones.

It is in the month of May that those who trade in it go samphire-gathering, for then the young fresh leaves are fit for picking. There is something picturesque about this harvest. For the most part it is carried on in wild and desolate places, and it possesses the fascination of danger. The trade is one of the most ancient that exists in the British Islands, and in the time of Shakespeare it used to run in families, like charcoal-burning in the New Forest, and flint-knapping in East Anglia. In Gerald's "Herbal" (1596) it is said, "Rock samphire groweth on the rocky cliffs of Dover, Winchelsea (Rye), about Southampton, and the Isle of Wight. The leaves kept in pickle and

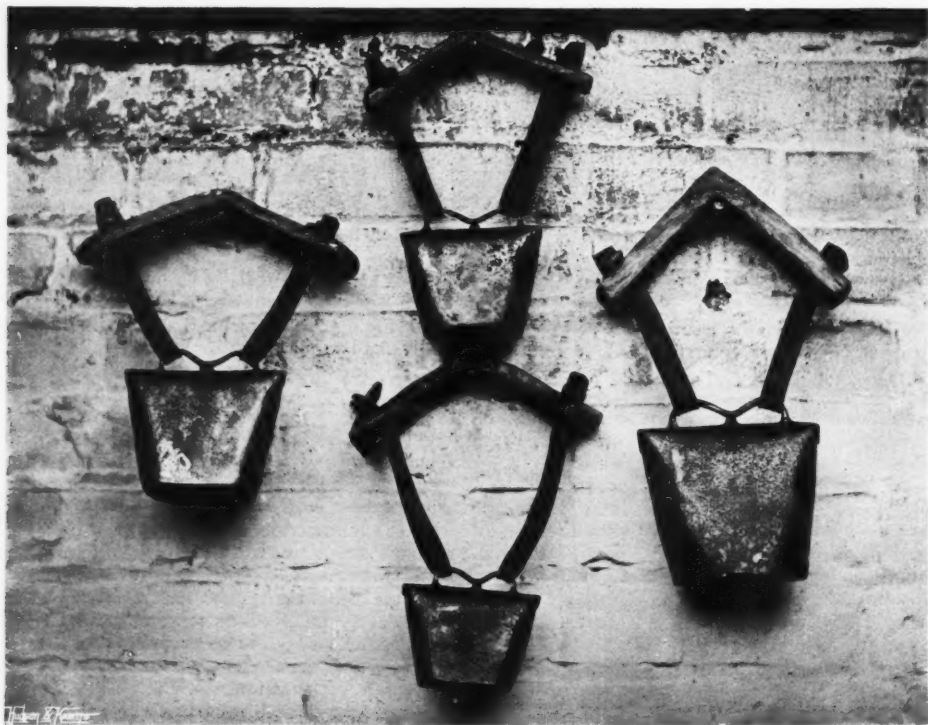
escapes. To a flower-lover there is no more delightful moment than that in which he sees for the first time a wild plant he knows well by name and description. Text-books tell us that the samphire is common, and so it is in places, yet we may be familiar with many parts of the English coast and not meet with it. Where it is at home, however, it grows freely. The plant is easily recognised, partly on account of its powerfully aromatic scent, and partly because its straggling, fleshy, glaucous leaves are like those of no other plant except, perhaps, the golden samphire, a very rare plant that grows on seacliffs and salt marshes, and bears large, single, gold-coloured flowers instead of an umbel of small yellow ones. This plant belongs to a different order.

It is curious that the samphire, notwithstanding its hardihood is somewhat fastidious where it grows. It must have its habitation well out of the reach of sea-water, which must never overflow the piece of ground it calls its own. Sailors and fishermen are well aware of this, and the knowledge has sometimes helped to save men's lives. On a dark and stormy night a party of wrecked fishermen, who were scaling the cliffs of Beachy Head to get above the reach of waves, found they were pulling at some weedy tufts which a flash of lightning showed were samphire plants. The discovery told them they had reached a position of safety.

It is to the piety of our forefathers that we owe many of our prettiest plant names. A host of wild flowers are associated with the name of Mary, or Our Lady, such as *mary-buds*, *rose-mary*, *ladies'-smock*, *ladies'-bedstraw*, and many another; and as most people know, the samphire was christened after St. Peter. The word "samphire" we now use is like enough to the old name "St. Pierre" to remind us of it. The Italians call it *Herba di San Pietro*. In France it is also prettily called the *Passe-pierre*, or *Christe-marine*, but the most popular name is also the most fitting for the flower that plants its footsteps on the rock.

It is rumoured that the edible samphire is to be caught and tamed and grown in gardens for the market; in fact, in some places this has already been done. It would surprise us very much if the plant thus grown would be worth having. Most probably in captivity, and over-fed, it would grow coarse and savourless, and certainly would lose all æsthetic charm. It is an amusing fact, and refreshing, too—as it shows that some elements of romance still linger in the public mind—that the edelweiss of Switzerland, if grown and sold in England, finds no market; yet among its native mountains its gatherers still pursue their dangerous calling, sometimes fatally, and people will give large sums for roots they could obtain in their own country for a few pence. In these days when we have adopted such a variety of edible plants from all parts of the world, it does seem as if we could do very well without annexing the samphire as a vegetable. The glory of the wild plants that clothe the stony steeps where nothing else can grow is their endowment of courage, strength, and capacity for endurance. Only among its natural surroundings of rock and sea can the fairness, and the goodness, and the value of the samphire be properly esteemed.

F. A. B.



AN INTERESTING ASSORTMENT.

eaten in salads, with oil and vinegar, is a pleasant sauce for meat." Ryland in his history of the county and city of Waterford (1324) refers to the terribly dangerous calling of the samphire-gatherers of that part of Ireland.

But it is not only those who trade in it who risk their lives to gather samphire. The very wayfarer who sees it growing halfway up or down the cliff, finds the temptation to secure it irresistible, and no season passes without adventures and narrow

the black shadows of the smithy. To him it is merely one of the many cheerful sounds that vocalise the peaceful activities of the country-side—just that and nothing more. Peter Bell himself were less hard to impress. But leave the road; go a-voyaging across the broad rolling billows of the downs and talk to a shepherd—or, better still, get him to talk to you—and forthwith is revealed the existence of an exact science of sheep-bells, a tyranny of fashion and a critical judgment in these concerns of

WILTSHIRE . SHEEP-BELLS.

EVERYONE knows the sound of the sheep-bells—that quaint muffled clangour which is so essentially a sound of country life. But not everyone, it is safe to say, knows how much care and thought and knowledge go to the choosing and the disposition of the bells for a flock of sheep. To the casual wayfarer that pleasant song without words has perhaps no clearer message than is conveyed by the drowsy hum of the threshing-machine, the murmur of the rushing waters under the mill, or the busy tune that the anvil sings in the black shadows of the smithy. To him it is merely one of the many cheerful sounds that vocalise the peaceful activities of the country-side—just that and nothing more. Peter Bell himself were less hard to impress. But leave the road; go a-voyaging across the broad rolling billows of the downs and talk to a shepherd—or, better still, get him to talk to you—and forthwith is revealed the existence of an exact science of sheep-bells, a tyranny of fashion and a critical judgment in these concerns of

which the amateur has but little conception. The question that first suggests itself is naturally, what is the use of the bells? And the shepherd, a man of few words and little practised in formulating reasons, finds it not altogether easy to answer. Gradually you gather from his slow speech that it is largely a matter of fashion. Other shepherds use them, have used them for centuries, and why not he? He likes the rough music, and what is more, the sheep seem to like it too. Indeed, for some mysterious reason, to which perhaps the age-long influence of heredity is a contributing factor, the ring has a distinctly soothing effect on them. Timidest and most gregarious of beasts, they recognise the bell as a rallying-point, and will feed more quietly and stray less so long as their nerves are calmed by the sedative tinkle.

"How many bells, then," you ask, "should be used—ten to a hundred sheep?" "Let's see," replies the shepherd meditatively, "ten to a hundred? That 'ud be thirty to a flock of three hundred sheep, 'udn't it? Yes, that 'ud make just about a pretty ring." Thus you have made the further discovery that the sheep-bell has a certain æsthetic value; it is to be regarded as something more than one of the tools of the shepherd's trade. On the other hand, a fine old character whom I am proud to call my friend maintains that ten bells to a hundred sheep is far too large a proportion. With the utilitarian object of the bell uppermost in his practical mind, he pronounces for five or six at most to a hundred, for "the sheep follow the bells, and if you have too many bell-wethers you'll soon have the flock straying all over the down, and that makes more work for man and dog." I know of yet another shepherd, with so appreciative an ear for these rural chimes, that he will put as many as twenty or even twenty-five bells on a hundred sheep; and every year when Wilton Fair comes round he buys bells, and yet more bells, to the derision of his fellows and the pinching of his children's bellies.

For sheep-bells, you must know, are the shepherd's own property, not his master's, and they cost much good silver. There are eight sizes of them, rising in price by 6d. a size from 1s. 6d. for the smallest to 5s., which is what you must pay for a "number eight." Two, three, four, and five are the sizes most commonly used. Sevens and eights are monstrous affairs; even a five is almost too big, for it weighs, with the apparatus by which it hangs, no less than 2½ lb. And though most shepherds own a few of the largest bells, it is more from a proper pride, a feeling that they must not be outdone by their neighbours, than from an assurance of any real superiority in these weighty ornaments. Yet a five or a six gives a fine sonorous note, and supplies the bass of the rustic orchestra.

The largest bell in the illustration, a "number six," is an exceptionally fine old specimen. It has been heard on a still day solemnly tolling at a distance of over two miles, and more than one shepherd enamoured of its deep boom has coveted it. It now has an honourable resting-place in a private collection of rustic odds and ends, where its beautiful colour and form make it not the least suggestive of many objects that seem to bring a whiff of bracing country air among the gas-lamps. And next you learn that the best bells are made at a tiny village hidden away in a fold of the hills on the northern side of Salisbury Plain. Only one man has the true secret of the bell-metal. His wares go all over the world—to Canada, the Argentine, and Australia—and no self-respecting Wiltshire shepherd would dream of using any other than the Cheverel bells. But since your shepherd is nothing if not *laudator temporis acti*, he will declare that the bells "bean't what they used to be." The old bells "came in more at the bottom," and gained, he thinks, a richer tone from that antique peculiarity of their fashioning. "And the stuff they used to make 'em of was better." He picks up one of the newer bells and gives it a shake. "Hark!" he says, "you can hear the rust on un"; and though your untrained ear can detect no difference in the tone, you humbly agree with him. As I say, the composition of the metal is a secret; apparently, it is some mixture of steel and brass; but whatever it is, it soon takes on with the weather a beautiful patina of purples and browns, in which the bright flecks of the yellow metal gleam with a fine decorative effect. The bell is made of a single piece of it, cunningly shaped and brazed, with but two rivets, one on either side near the mouth, to give extra security to the joins.

It is fastened about the sheep's neck by a simple archaic apparatus of "collar," "tugs," and "pins." The collar, you are surprised to discover, expecting to find, perhaps, a broad strap used for the purpose, is a stout piece of wood with a section of

about 1½ in. square, chosen for the bend of its natural growth, or sawn to such an angle that it will ride comfortably on the animal's neck. In these parts the collars are generally made of yew wood, but any piece of wood—fir, or apple tree, or elm—so long as it is of a suitable shape, is employed. Towards the ends of the collar, and right through the thickness of the hard wood, are two holes neatly squared and patiently cut with the shepherd's knife. Try yourself to cut, with a large-bladed



SHEEP COLLAR PINS.

pocket-knife, a neat, square hole through even a piece of soft deal without splitting it, and you will find that this is an operation not to be completed without considerable toil; and you catch some hint of the quiet passing of the days in that patriarchal calling when, in reply to your suggestion that he must need some time and a good deal of patience to make a collar, the man replies, "Well, ye see, we've plenty of time to ourselves up here on the downs."

Through the holes thus made are passed the ends of the "tugs," two long loops of leather that hold the ears of the bell in the right of them, and "pins" like those in the second illustration thrust through slits in the leather hold the bell securely in its place.

These pins are usually made of yew wood—it is easy to come by and practically indestructible, and they are cut to the required shape, which, with certain variations of size, is always practically the same, with the patient care and thoroughness that characterise the shepherd's every action. Some of the pins here pictured are of quite respectable antiquity—twenty, forty, or perhaps a hundred years old: who can tell? Three at least of them are older than the memory of man goeth. The grooves, deeply scored by the chafing of tugs that have swung about the necks of innumerable sheep, tell a story of age that is plain to be read. And there you have your sheep-bell, with collar, tugs, and pins complete. Venerable, and in their homely way beautiful, these things give a glimpse of the unchangeableness, the peace, and the patience of the country life; and, as you leave your friend the shepherd to his lonely occupation, and drop down to the road that leads away from his aloofness back to the turmoil of the things that you know about, you feel that up there on the downs there broods some measure of the spirit of an older time, some of the power of simplicity and the capacity to shape means to the desired end that have not been without their effect in the forming of this English character of ours. E. E. D.

FROM THE FARMS.

FARMERS AND ENGINE SPARKS.

IN the House of Commons last week, the second reading of a Bill very interesting to farmers took place. Its object was to make railway companies liable to compensation for damage done to crops by sparks from engines. One would think that the principle of the measure ought to be generally approved. It is recognised by the private owners of engines who are responsible for any damage done by them. Why the railways should be exonerated it is difficult to see. Often enough it has happened that an express train tearing through the country in a race with some opponent, has caused ripe grain and even hay to ignite, and it seems but a reasonable act of justice that those who derive benefit from running the trains should pay for the damage done. The only practical objection offered was that at present railway shareholders are earning so little from their shares; but that is a matter that concerns them. If a private individual in the pursuit of his avocation were to inflict damage upon the goods of somebody else, it would not be held any proper excuse that he wasn't carrying on a profitable business. The reply does not meet the case advanced by Mr. Mount, and ably supported by Mr. George White, Lord Turnour, Mr. Spear, and

others. The attitude of the Government seems to be one of neutral vigilance, but we think this is a measure that Ministers might have been fairly expected to support.

GOOD FRIENDS.

Mr. Arthur Morrow writes to us: "You may perhaps find the enclosed photograph worthy of a place in your columns, showing, as it does, an interesting type of country life. The old man shown in the photograph has spent the whole of his life on Foulness Island, off the coast of Essex, and is a most interesting character. His affection for his horses is truly remarkable, and the vocabulary from which he draws his terms of endearment for them is extremely forcible and extensive, but perhaps hardly suited for publication. It is only due to him, however, to say that in his dealings with ladies and little children he is gentleness and courtesy itself."

THE FARM IN MARCH.

The weather of March is giving rise to many perplexing thoughts. On the one hand, it is indisputable that we need more rain than we have yet obtained. Two months of drought have left the land much drier than it should be at this season of the year, and already we hear of rivers shrinking, and wells which, according to the old proverb, "as the day lengthens, the well strengthens," ought now to be overflowing are yielding a diminished supply of water. But if for these reasons rain is earnestly desired, it is as certainly not required in the month which is pre-eminently that of seed sowing. If the drought would but continue for the next few weeks, the windows of heaven might open in April and pour the rain down without doing the slightest damage. Meanwhile it is not difficult to discern tokens of spring. A coltsfoot or a celandine may here and there be showing its flower, little buds may be forming on the trees, and the birds carolling their love-songs; but the aspect of the country



GOOD FRIENDS.

is still most decidedly that of winter, even though the young lambs are bleating on the meadows. Not till "Apriles with his shoures swete" arrives will the tender green appear that is the real and genuine sign of spring.

ABOUT PRICES.

The tendency of prices in all directions seems to be upward at the present moment. In dairy products there has been a great falling off of Colonial produce, and as there is plenty of demand, butter is considerably enhanced in value. At the same time, Danish butter tends to go down, while cheese is having a very good market. The meat trade shows a tendency to become livelier than it has been, especially in regard to the beef and mutton which are home fed. But even chilled beef is tending to rise in price, and the very cheap meat which could be obtained some time ago has disappeared. Chilled Argentine beef has been as low as 2½d. to 3d. per lb., whereas the average quotation at the present moment is quite 1d. higher. English and Dutch pork continue to demand good prices, but that which comes from America is falling in value. These remarks relate particularly to the London market, but the movements in the provinces have been very much of the same description. As to wheat, no one can at present say anything very definite, except that momentous changes are impending. It is becoming more and more evident that the United States in the future is unlikely to be the source of supply that it has been in the past. It even promises to engulf part of that which comes from Canada. No one can predicate what is going to happen in Russia, beyond saying that the quantity of wheat exported from that country is almost bound to decrease. We are, therefore, forced to trust more and more to India; but the Indian crop is one of the most variable in the world. No one can tell beforehand whether a lean year or a year of plenty is the more likely to ensue.

WILD COUNTRY LIFE.

THE CHANGE OF SEASON.

WHATEVER weather may be in store for us—or, indeed, may be prevailing when these lines are printed—there is no doubt whatever, as I write, that spring has commenced in earnest. There is no kind of resident bird whose manners and habits have not undergone that complete change which always marks the transition from winter to spring. Of course there are many birds, such as stonechats, meadow-pipits, and pied wagtails, which are classed in the books as resident birds because they are with us all through the year; but I regard these as migrants in reality, for I doubt whether any individual stonechat, pipit, or pied wagtail spends the winter within hundreds of miles of the place where it was reared or where it nested in the summer. I believe that the same southerly winds which will in a short time bring back our admittedly migratory whinchats will also bring back our nominally resident stonechats. So, as marking the transit from winter to spring, one does not look for signs of the season yet in the conduct of such wanderers; but, where our truly resident birds are concerned, there leap to the eye and fall upon the ear from every side.

A BLACKBIRD AND THRUSH CONTRAST.

Look at the blackbirds, for instance. They begin to sing always a good deal later than the thrushes, because apparently they first win their wives by a sort of beauty competition, then settle with each other about nesting sites, and finally celebrate their success with song. The thrush, on the other hand, appears to commence proceedings by proclaiming in song his claim to a certain site; and there to the best of his ability he holds his own against all comers and attracts to his side a mate. No doubt we see the result of this different line of conduct in the fact that the male blackbird is decked out in competition in a striking contrast of sooty black plumage and golden bill, while the male thrush is not distinguishable from his speckled mate. And the origin of the difference in conduct which has led to this distinction in sexual plumage is, probably, a distinction in their methods of feeding, the blackbird wandering afield in winter and consorting with others of his kind a good deal, while the thrush stays near the same spot always and remains solitary.

ULTIMATE EFFECTS OF FOOD.

Thus we see how a little difference in the matter of diet, which causes allied birds to follow slightly different methods of life in winter, leads to changed habits in other respects, and even to change of plumage. In a word, the stay-at-home thrush has no need of sexual adornment, because he bases his claim to a wife upon his possession of a home, where he is at liberty to sing as soon as the spirit moves him in the early year, whereas the truant blackbird has to win his wife in competition and afterwards to find a home, and fight for it if necessary, before he can claim the right to sing. This explains, of course, why song-thrushes and missel-thrushes commence to sing in late autumn and blackbirds do not. In the case of the thrushes the young birds of the year have to begin life by establishing their claim to a home of their own; but the blackbirds need not do this until nesting-time draws near; and, when we hear the weak and imperfect notes of the autumn-singing thrushes, we recognise the untuned voices of youngsters doing their little best to make a noise in the world. The older thrushes have their holdings by right of long possession, and have no need to sing about it; though sometimes when a young thrush takes up his singing-pitch too near the homestead of an older bird, you may see the latter go for the singer and "have him out of that" with promptitude and despatch.

HEDGE-SPARROW AND ROBIN.

An equally instructive contrast, arising also from a similar difference in the method of feeding, is presented by the robin and hedge-sparrow. The latter, with its methodical system of examining the ground for scraps of food, so minute that no other bird seems able to find them, has no need of the separate hunting-ground, which is so urgent a necessity with the robin, that he even drives away his own wife to a separate hunting-ground of her own. And it is a pretty illustration of the meaning of birds' songs—as the defiance uttered by birds in possession against all comers of their kind—that during this winter period of compulsory separation from their husbands, the female robins sing and fight, and generally play the man, in defence of their holdings. On the other hand, the hedge-sparrows remain together, although the young males of the year must, as in the case of thrushes, begin to assert their rights in early autumn. From this comparison of the robin and the hedge-sparrow in winter, the latter might seem the more amiable bird—were not such an epithet entirely misplaced in application to the habits of the species—but now the robin makes large amends for his past harshness in the courteous grace with which he inducts his wife to her summer home. He does the honour of the birds'-table to her with an air that birds six times his size might envy.

THE IRREPRESSIBLE TITS.

The tits resemble the robins now in elaborate display of devotion to their mates, as in winter they resembled them in their intolerance of any intruders of their kind; but there was always this difference, that, whereas a robin effectually disposes of an interloper after a pitched battle and a fierce pursuit, tits are so irrepresible and apparently ubiquitous, that they cannot even suppress each other for more than half a minute. So, where one robin would mount guard over the food-table against all other robins, there would be a ceaseless procession of persistent tits, each taking momentary precedence according to his fighting weight. So, too, now, when the tits, like the robins, have paired for the season, the only difference is that the procession is composed of pairs instead of single birds.

TWO FEBRUARY SONGSTERS.

Similarity, rather than contrast, is to be seen in the changed conduct of two other familiar songsters, the yellow-hammer and chaffinch, who both begin to sing again in the latter half of February, and later seem to dominate all the bird-music of the fields by day with the constant reiteration of their little songs. Both of these, when once settled in life, remain always near their nesting haunts, although the exigencies of winter may compel them to find warmer roosting-places, and drive them to congregate with mixed flocks of small birds where food is to be had. So soon as Nature begins to move towards spring, however, with that decided quickening which always comes after mild days in February, both yellow-hammer and chaffinch resume possession of their homes, and announce the fact in almost ceaseless song to all whom it may concern.

SPRING'S MANY VOICES.

Thus each bird has already told us in its own way—even the sparrows show the message in their brawling scenes of courtship—that spring has commenced. We hear it in the changed note of the passing curlew, and in the confident, syllabled cry of the peewit, now swooping over the wastes where he will breed, instead of rising from among the turnips or stubble with the murred wail of his winter warning. We hear it in the new tone of the long-eared owl in the pinewood, like the very distant barking of a dog—a shrill hoot so soft and ventriloquial that you can hardly locate the tree whence it issues, yet intended nevertheless by the owl to be a war-cry and defiance, because you dare to be wandering near the tree where he proposes to have his nest in some squirrel's abandoned lodging. And the owl's note is answered in richer, fuller tones by the cooing wood-pigeon—even at night sometimes the wood-pigeon seems to take the owl's hoot for some distant rival's challenge, and will sleepily coo out his answer into the dark—while strange tumult and hearse ejaculations from the long-silent heronry tell that the work of nest-building is at its busiest. Flapping, tugging, and twisting, the giant birds wrench off the twigs and bear them to their building mates, with constant exchange of what may be their "soft nothings," in raucous tones that vibrate across the landscape. "Krar, krar, krar, krar," shouts a hooded crow swinging far off in a high poplar; and "krar, krar, krar, krar," answers another from a distant elm. Though they have far to go before they will nest, this new insistence in the hoodies' repetitions of their croaking cry only emphasises what all our home-birds are saying—that spring has come.

E. K. R.

CORRESPONDENCE.

HOW MOLE-HEAPS ARE FORMED.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—When out for a walk with a friend last week we came across a mole-heap with a mole at work inside. I should like you to explain how they throw the mould up without coming to the top outside, and what course they take to get the mould along the hole. After they have loosened the mould, how do they bring it back to throw the heaps up without coming through the surface? Hoping this is plain to you, and trusting to receive an answer in your next issue of COUNTRY LIFE.—T. BARLOW.

[The mole, in burrowing his tunnels, seems to swim through the earth rather than to dig his way, and our correspondent's difficulty is evidently to understand how, after he has swum through the earth to a certain point, and has, therefore, left the loose mould behind him, he manages to thrust this out above the surface of the ground. The explanation is that, although much of the earth is never removed from the runs, but beaten hard by the frequent passage of the mole into the walls and floor of the tunnel, the creature finds it more expeditious in busy times to clear the runs of the loose earth. This he does at a point where the run comes to the surface by pushing the earth before him with his flat forehead and face. Sometimes, where the earth binds easily, he pushes out the mould in solid round plugs, showing the exact dimension of the orifice through which they have been thrust. When the mole is hunting or travelling underground, he has no need to throw up the earth; this is a subsequent operation for the purpose of clearing the runs for regular use.—ED.]

CURIOUS ACCIDENT TO A FOX-HOUND.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—A curious and fatal accident that occurred this season to a hound belonging to one of the Devonshire packs may be worth your notice in COUNTRY LIFE, if only for the sake of the warning it conveys to Masters of Hounds and others. Whilst they were cutting up the fox preparatory to giving it to the hounds, one of the pads was dropped, and before anything could be done to stop it, a hound had gobbled it up, and, swallowing it whole, presumably found it too tough a morsel for digestion,

and shortly died. The case is curious in itself, and may give a hint that may possibly save the life of one or more good hounds in the future.—H.

A PLEA FOR CRICKET.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—As an old cricketer, I was much surprised to read in your issue of the 4th inst. that the Combe Warren Cricket Club have received notice to quit the ground on which, by permission of the late Duke of Cambridge, they have played for nearly forty years. The reasons given for this driving of another nail into the coffin of our grand old game of cricket, appear to be almost an insult added to injury. The cricket club is told to go because the ground is required for the use of a golf club, and it is further added "that the smaller sport must give way to the greater." COUNTRY LIFE has always shown such appreciation of clean and healthy forms of sport that I hope, Mr. Editor, you will allow me to make an appeal to the old who have played cricket, as well as to those who are still capable of taking an active part in the game, to use all their efforts to prevent the decay of what is essentially the Englishman's game. I hear on all sides complaints from secretaries of cricket clubs that their younger members wander away to the golf links instead of practising at the nets, and that it is difficult to extract the smallest subscriptions from men who used to be always ready to assist their local clubs. I have not a word to say against golf. It is a grand game, and undoubtedly a fine, healthy, open-air sport; but it is not cricket, and not even its keenest votaries can surely claim that it can compare with cricket as a means for developing muscle, nerve, and self-reliance. Play golf by all means, but don't neglect to keep up cricket. There is no reason why the two games should clash. My boys all play golf; but they also head the batting average at their school—much to the joy of their cricketing parent.—FAIRPLAY.

THE SPARROW PEST.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I am endeavouring to get the farmers in my district in Scotland to combine to get rid of the sparrows which have become very numerous, and destroy a great quantity of the crops. Can any of your readers help me as to the best plan to adopt?—E. M.

AN EPITAPH.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—May I make a slight correction to the article appearing in COUNTRY LIFE for March 4th, entitled "Magazines for the Month"? The epitaph, quoted from the *English Illustrated Magazine*, is said to be found in Bramfield Church, Sussex; it should be Bramfield Church, Suffolk.—CONSTANCE E. THOMPSON.

DIFFICULTY OF RAISING BROOM ON A CHALK SOIL.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I have raised some thousands of tiny seedlings from Scotch seed, only to have 99 per cent. eaten up as soon as they appear above ground. Lime and soot have been of no avail, and I should be grateful for any hints you or your readers may be able to give me. The few that have been raised are magnificent, and shower seed around them for yards, but in the last eight years not a single plant has come up. The seed will come up in boxes inside a frame, so it is not unfertile.—P.

SPRING WITHIN DOORS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I see that you quote, as if it were my husband's, a letter which I wrote to *The Times* three weeks ago. It has caused such general interest, that I think you may like to have photographs of my twigs in their different stages. Those I send are pictures of a bunch of the common red ribes, as it was when picked about the end of January, and as it appeared with its white bloom in about a fortnight's time. The horse-chestnut was gathered about New Year-time in various stages of development. The ordinary lilac was picked early in February, and is now coming into flower and leaf. I may mention that we have had several bunches of *Daphne Mezereum*, which has come into flower very quickly and beautifully in the house, and also larch, which was picked a week ago, and looked quite dead, is now beginning to show its green buds through the pink.—M. L. PARKER SMITH.

The following is the letter referred to by Mrs. Parker Smith: "To lovers of flowers and to those who desire to watch the beautiful developments of the spring, I should like to tell of an interesting experiment I tried last year with success, and which is also giving us great pleasure again this year. Before I went to London in January of last year I picked some branches of the common red ribes and some currant branches, which, after a few



FLOWERING LILAC.

mild days, were showing some signs of coming out, which made one exclaim and say, 'The silly things will soon be nipped by the frost.' I took them with me, and split the stalks up with a sharp pair of scissors and tore up a little of the bark, and put them into warm water, placing them on a mantel-piece where they got some heat from the fire. We then watched them come slowly out—a very little green first, and then the flowers came all down the stalk, pure white instead of red, like a new and beautiful Japanese flower. They lasted quite three to four weeks—and one watched spring unfolding itself in one's room. This year I picked early in January some sticky brown buds of horse-chestnut, which are now already opening out their lovely green leaves. I am also succeeding with



WHITE BLOSSOMING OF RED RIBES.

and elsewhere. The experiment seems obvious, but I have never seen or heard of its being tried."—[ED.]

FIRE IN COUNTRY HOUSES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I do not know whether your correspondent "J. M." is a maker of or directly interested in fire-extinguishing apparatus, as in that case I can quite understand his letter; but I do not at all agree with him when he says that insurance companies should charge a higher rate for any place not properly provided with apparatus for extinguishing fires. Prevention, Sir, is better, we are told, than cure, and I think that the fact of seeing that all fires are out in a house by a certain time at night is better than all the apparatus that could be prepared outside. Once let a fire get a good hold of a place, especially with a wind blowing, and there is little to be done except to get all valuables out of doors or windows, and leave the house to its fate. The small bottle apparatus is all that can be used on most occasions. Once let a fire get beyond this, and I fancy it is usually a case for the builder, or, rather, the rebuilder.—G. F. M.

PROHIBITION OF FISHING IN SPAIN.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—To any of your readers who may be thinking of going to fish for trout in any of the Pyrenean rivers on the Spanish side, as people now and again think of doing, it may be as well to give them the laconic advice of *Punch* to those contemplating matrimony—"Don't." There is no difficulty in getting the official "permit." Your five francs will be accepted, and you will get a paper licence in return. But your licence is a paper one only. All fishing in Spain, or, at least, in that part of it, has been prohibited until the end of July. The statement that this was the case seemed so unlikely, that a question was asked as to its accuracy of the British Consul at



OPENING BUDS OF THE HORSE-CHESTNUT.

branches of beech, birch, rose, lilac, and *Daphne Mezereum*, whose curves and swelling buds are as graceful as any flowers, and I again have my ribes coming out the same beautiful white. I am sure to many in town this would give intense interest and pleasure, and I find my servants have started it in the kitchen

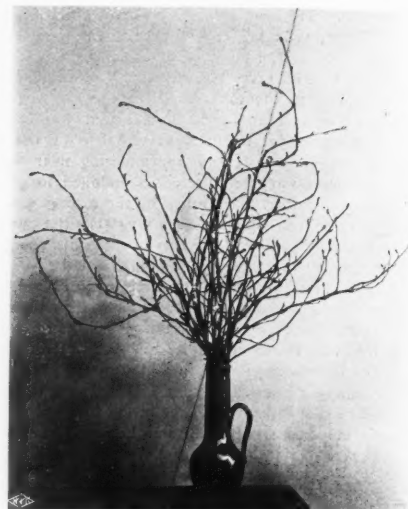
of this appears in the title deeds of an old house at Cobham in Kent. It was obligatory on the owner of the house to keep the village "quintain" in order for the men-at-arms to practise at. The quintain, which still remains in the village, was a kind of double-barrelled instrument for training a man-at-arms. At one end was the target, which the lance must strike. At the other end of the pivoted cross-beam was a heavy bag of sand, which swung round when the target was struck, and if the rider did not duck caught him on the head. The object was to teach the rider to avoid the stroke of the mace which followed a miss with the spear. What every village now wants is a miniature rifle range, and every encouragement to use it. Suppose someone were to follow the example of the ancient owner of the house at Cobham, and leave a small charge on his property to maintain such a range and, perhaps, to provide a few prizes. He might set the fashion; nor need such endowments be expected only from men. Ladies are just as good patriots, and, as a rule, much freer from fads about "militarism" than men are. Another highly-useful form of bequest, where there are village almshouses, would be to endow a set or two of chambers for old soldiers who are natives of the village, the rooms to be allotted to others in case there was no suitable veteran available.—C. J. C.

St. Sebastian, and I am assured that his answer was to confirm it absolutely. This may be for the eventual good of the trout, but it is not for the immediate encouragement of the angler.—HORACE G. HUTCHINSON.

PRO PATRIA.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—When we compare the feeling of to-day in regard to an Englishman's duty to defend the country and the feeling of the Plantagenet and Tudor England on the same subject, the results are not quite so favourable to our own time as could be wished. Then, to keep the body fit, and the hand and eye expert in the use of arms, was one of the first duties prescribed by law and enforced equally by public opinion. A reminder

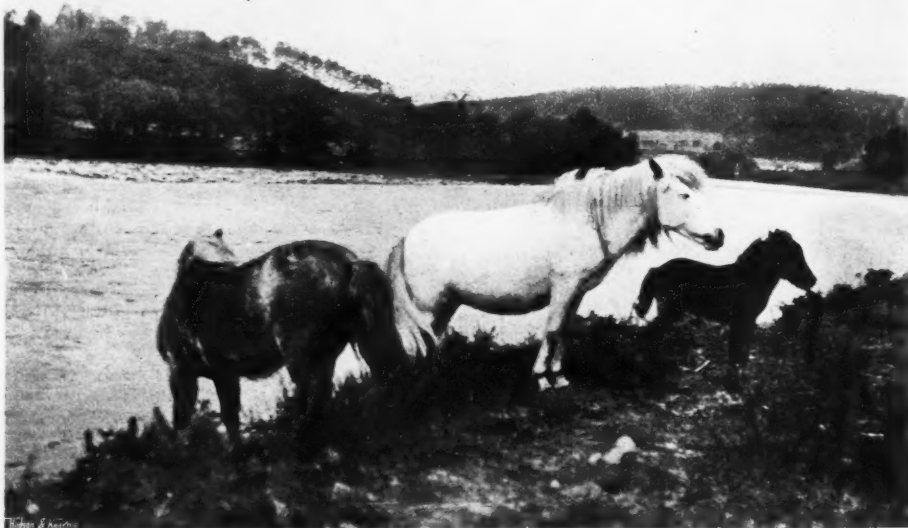


RED RIBES IN JANUARY.

A CUNNING PONY.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The principal features in the photograph, for which I hope you will find space, are the old white mare and her foal. Her cunning expression is by no means a bad indication of her actual character; she is a thief to begin with, and a most accomplished one. At one time corn was kept in a bin at the end of a sort of barn, in which she and some other ponies sheltered for the night. The corn disappeared in an extraordinary fashion, which no one could account for, until one evening, hearing a scuffling noise in the barn, I went in to see what was going on, and found her lifting up the lid of the bin with her teeth, which accounted both for the missing corn and the excellent condition of Vixen. Her bad example is being copied by her foal, who is the trickiest little wretch that ever walked.—VINDEN.



A CONTEMPLATIVE ATTITUDE.